



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



LECTURES  
ON THE  
ENGLISH POETS

47.306.





LECTURES

ON THE

ENGLISH POETS.



LONDON:  
GEORGE EARLE, 67, CASTLE STREET EAST,  
BERNERS STREET, OXFORD STREET.

---

1847.



## PREFACE.

---

THE following pages were not originally intended for the public eye, but were written for the instruction of the Author's children, and read to one of them in the beginning of the year 1841. They were lately perused by a friend of the Author, who recommended the publication of them as containing a concise and connected view of our Poets, and their poetry, without the introduction of those long, and sometimes not very judiciously selected, specimens or extracts with which works of a similar nature generally abound, but which interrupt the survey, and add much to the size and expense of the book. As his other many avocations did not allow him time to revise his composition with that attention which the subject requires, the Author at first felt disinclined to its being printed; but, in the hope that, even as it now stands, it may be of some service to its readers, or at least, to the younger portion of them, he has been induced to comply with his friend's suggestion.



## LECTURES ON THE ENGLISH POETS.

---

### LECTURE I.

It may very naturally be expected that any discourse assuming, however unworthily, the shape of a Lecture on Poetry, should commence with some definition of the art. Now, although we have met with many different definitions of it, we have never found one of so clear and distinct a character as to give us complete satisfaction. Therefore, whether it be, as defined by Dr. Johnson, "*The art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason;*"—by Dr. Blair as "*The language of passion or enlivened imagination, formed most commonly into regular numbers;*" or, according to the present learned Archbishop of Dublin, "*Elegant and decorated language in metre, expressing such and such thoughts;*" or which of these definitions approaches the nearest to correctness we do not presume to determine. Nor do we offer one of our own; but would rather say, with the first named celebrated philologist, when, though some-

what inconsistently, he observes, "to circumscribe poetry by definition would only shew the narrowness of the definer."

Neither is it our intention, unequal as we are to the task, to enter into any deep or philosophical inquiry into the nature or origin of Poetry, nor to dwell upon its rank or importance in the realms of literature, placed as it has been in a scale higher than history,—“above philosophers’ works and orators’ harangues.” That it is natural to mankind may be inferred from its universal diffusion;—so universal that, according to Sir Philip Sidney, whilst no learned nation doth despise it, no barbarous nation is without it. It no doubt exists in its essential qualities amongst the most uncultivated people, finding its way, as Lord Bacon says, where other learning stands excluded. The natives of every country, however ignorant or illiterate, make use of impassioned and oftentimes of very figurative language.\* Whether triumphing over the defeat of their foes, or bewailing the loss of their friends,—whether celebrating the bravery of their leaders, or the beauty of their loves,—the Muse will be found conveying to them her most genuine inspirations.

“Oft, beneath the odorous shade  
Of Chili’s boundless forests laid,  
She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat,  
In loose numbers, wildly sweet,  
Their feather’d-cinctured chiefs and dusky loves.”

\* Appendix, Note A.

The ancient Britons, like other Celtic nations, were passionately fond of poetry, and held their poets, the Bards, in the highest estimation. These composed for them hymns in honor of their gods, and heroic songs in praise of their great men. Our Teutonic ancestors also partook of this passion for poetical compositions, and the minstrels of the Anglo-Saxons were held in almost an equal degree of veneration with the Bards. The examination of English poetry may therefore be entered upon without seeking for it in any foreign origin, although it has no doubt been much influenced in its progress by the poetry of other nations; particularly, in its earlier stages, by that of France and Italy; afterwards by the classical productions of Greece and Rome, and the sublime strains of the Hebrew Scriptures; again, by the adoption of French models, and more recently, perhaps, by the wildness and extravagance of the German school. And such an examination would, probably, be much facilitated by dividing it according to certain distinct periods of the history of the country. We are aware of the difficulty of establishing any such definite boundaries, for it has been well said, that the different periods of literary history melt into each other like the colours of the rainbow; yet we can have little doubt but that there are certain æras in the annals of a country, the events of which create in the minds of the then existing generation those feelings and opinions that neces-

sarily influence its literature, whilst its literature in return influences and modifies the character of the people. The following divisions may appear fanciful or novel, but we will adopt them for the present occasion.

The 1st period, then, shall be the time before the Reformation.

The 2d from the Reformation to the Restoration.

The 3d from the Restoration to the French Revolution.

The 4th from the latter period to the present time.

Now, although the earliest subjects of our country's muse—the Romances of the Round Table, and the Quest of the St. Graal;\* the magic of Merlin, and the fairy feats of Morgana,† with the lays of Taliessin and Aneurin,‡ blending the ancient druidical feelings with the then recently inculcated principles of christianity,—must always possess a lively interest for the poetical antiquary; and although the reigns of Alfred and Canute, who, poets themselves, were also great patrons of the poetical art, and the powerful influence which those Trouvères or Minstrels who accompanied the Norman conquerors are said to have exercised upon the poetical literature of the period, can

\* Appendix, Note B.      † Note C.      ‡ Note D.

scarcely be passed over unnoticed by any one desirous of tracing the progress of our national poetry; yet the investigation of such subjects would be quite incompatible with the more cursory view we propose to take: And but for that reason too we would endeavour to give an outline of the various opinions which have been entertained respecting the commencement of what is generally termed "The Romantic Age of Poetry;" whether to ascribe it with some to an Arabian or Persian origin,—with others to a Gothic source,—to the Scalds of Scandinavia, and the wild Sagas of the North, or to seek it at a British or Armorican fountain.\* However inadequate our powers, we would make the attempt, and for once

" Essay to break a feeble lance  
In the fair fields of old Romance."

But we must begin with the poet Chaucer, who, Chaucer, b. 1328, d. 1400. it is said, first gave to English poetry that tone and character which have created for him the fame of being its founder. At the period when Chaucer wrote, the Arts, which had for some time dawned upon Italy, began to throw a few feeble rays upon this country, and, uniting with the disgust at Romish superstitions then beginning to prevail, gave an impetus to the national mind, in which Chaucer's genius and boldness of character led him largely to participate; whilst his station in life,

\* Note E.

and the patronage of Edward III., and John of Gaunt, together with the comparatively increased facilities of intercourse with other nations, gave him an opportunity of visiting foreign countries, and improving his natural abilities. During his sojourn in Italy he became acquainted with Petrarch, then in the zenith of his fame, from whom he is supposed to have imbibed a familiarity with the Italian language, which enabled him to give to his own a greater softness, and to embellish it with a more copious and flowing phraseology. Still Dryden observes that his verse is not very harmonious, but like the rudeness of a Scotch tune, "natural and pleasing, yet not perfect." This, however, has been denied by Mr. Tyrwhitt, who asserts that his versification is uniformly correct, and attributes its apparent incorrectness to the changes which have been made in the accentuation of our language.

Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose* is a translation from a French poem, the principal parts whereof are allegorical, a mode of writing which during the preceding century had been a favorite one with the Troubadours of Provence. These minstrels were much patronized by the Crusaders, whom they often attended, and whose exploits they sang. Richard I., on his return from the Holy Land, invited many of them to his Court, where they were much caressed, and, as the French language since the Conquest had become familiar to the

higher classes in this country, their tales of chivalry and love,—“*La Gaye Science*,”—enriched now by all the wonders of the East, were greatly admired, and being translated from the Provençal dialect into English, caused much innovation in our style.\*

The *Palemon and Arcite* of Chaucer is called by Dryden a noble poem, and *Troilus and Cresside* is considered as a very pathetic one. His *Dream* too has been much admired. But the principal work of our poet is his *Canterbury Tales*, consisting of a series of stories supposed to be told by a company of pilgrims met together at an inn in Southwark, on their journey to the shrine of Thomas à Becket.

“And specially fro’ every Shir’ is end  
Of England to Canterbury they wend,  
The holy blissful Martyr for to seke.”

The two principal tales are *The Knight’s Tale*, and *The Squire’s Tale*; but in all of them Chaucer gives us the various manners of the English nation at the time he wrote. We have, as Dryden says, our forefathers and great grand-dams all before us as they were in Chaucer’s days, and, as he sagaciously, and somewhat satirically remarks, their

\* The Troubadours were the Minstrels of Provence and the South of the Loire, as their brethren, the Trouvœurs, or Trouvères, were those of the North.

A very interesting account of both may be found in Sismondi’s “*Historical View of the South of Europe*,” translated by Mr. Roscoe.

general characters are still remaining in England, though called by other names than those of monks, friars, lady abbesses, and nuns. Chaucer was the first poet who gave to the English an idea of humour in their own language, and was the inventor of the ten syllable or heroic verse. Warton pronounces upon him a high panegyrick. "His genius," he says, "was universal, and adapted to themes of unbounded variety, painting familiar manners with humour and propriety, and moving the passions, and representing the beautiful or the grand objects of nature with grace and sublimity."

Gower,  
b. 1325.  
d. 1409.

Contemporary with Chaucer was Sir John Gower, whom Dr. Johnson, in opposition to the general opinion, considers entitled to be styled the founder of English Poetry.\* At the instance of Richard II. Gower wrote his principal poem called *Confessio Amantis*, or the Confession of a Lover, being a dialogue between a lover and his confessor, wherein a poetical system of morality is illustrated by a series of appropriate, though common placed tales; showing how the bad affections of the heart counteract the progress of the tender passion, and how a lover, to be fortunate in his suit, must be a good and religious man. Its great length however, its allegorical nature, and its obscure English, have prevented its being much read. Chaucer, who was his admirer and friend, calls him "the moral

\* History of the English Language.

Gower:" both indeed might be said to have "moralized their song." Chaucer's works are more numerous than Gower's, and he has been generally, and justly, considered the superior poet. Mr. Hallam observes that Gower was not, like Chaucer, a poet of nature's growth, yet always sensible and polished; rendering our language less rude, and exciting a taste for verse.

During the period in which Chaucer and Gower Longlands. lived, Longlands, a secular priest and a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, published *The Visions of Piers Plowman*. These visions are supposed to be seen by an imaginary being whilst sleeping on the Malvern Hills, the whole race of mankind, pursuing their various callings, appearing before him. It is an allegorical production, intended to expose the abuses of society, and contains many satirical attacks on the clerical profession, and particularly on the Pope, whom he prays God to amend. It is full of alliteration, a style very characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and supposed to be a relic of Danish composition. Longland's diction is said to be very unrefined and obsolete even for that period, and his work to be full of strange conceits and chimerical personifications; but still he is regarded as a poet of vigour, imagination and originality, and in point of time the first of our satirists. Doubts have been entertained whether these *Visions* preceded all the productions of

Chaucer, but they certainly did his *Canterbury Tales*.

Oocleve  
and  
Lydgate,  
b. 1379.  
d. 1461.

From this time there was, for nearly a century, a great dearth of poetical talent, although there were, according to Ritson, numberless versifiers—the sublime fancies of Chaucer giving place to legends, homilies, and chronicles in verse. Warton however awards some praise to two poets who flourished in the interval—to Oocleve, for contributing to propagate and establish those improvements in our language which had been commenced; and to Lydgate, a monk, for perspicuity in writing and versatility of talent, and whose works to enumerate, he says, would be to write a little library. Of him, the latter, he also adds, “His muse was of universal access, and he was not only the poet of his monastery, but of the world in general—if a Disguising was intended by the Company of Goldsmiths—a Mask before his Majesty, at Eltham—a May-game for the Sheriffs and Aldermen of London, or a Carol for the Coronation, Lydgate was consulted and gave the poetry.” But with these two exceptions, the reigns of Henry IV. and his five immediate successors, were very deficient in the production of any works of merit. Henry’s own reign was one of great turbulence, and, although it is said he befriended Chaucer, he appears to have given very little encouragement to literature; indeed he seems, either

from prejudice or political motives, rather to have discouraged the poetical art, and we find, amongst his other harsh laws against the natives of Wales, a statute expressly, and somewhat contemptuously, putting down the Welsh Minstrels.

The foreign wars of his son too were also adverse to polite learning. Henry V. however was certainly desirous of giving it assistance; he had a number of attendant minstrels, both on his coronation, and on his invasion of France, whom he paid very handsomely, and to whom, on his death, he left very considerable annuities. He seems also to have been fully aware of the powerful effect of poetry in stimulating the mind to glory, as, by his express command it was, that Lydgate wrote his *Death of Hector*, for the purpose, it is supposed, of infusing a warlike spirit into the nation. This latter circumstance, a recent author, Mr. Mills,\* considers as a pleasing and convincing proof of the chivalrous spirit of Henry, and attributes it to the desire of that monarch to restore the public mind to its ancient military tone. Lydgate also, by Henry's wish, wrote his *Seige of Troye*.†

\* History of Chivalry.

† It appears however that both poems were begun while Henry was Prince of Wales, and were *then* undertaken by *his* express desire. This fact, coupled with the language of the poems themselves, the Rev. Mr. Tyler considers to be a strong proof, amongst other forcible ones which he adduces, that the popular belief of Henry's youthful excesses, and Shakespeare's delineation of his early character, are not in accordance with historical truth.—*Memoirs of Henry V., by the Rev. J. Endell Tyler, B.D.*

The contentions of the Houses of York and Lancaster consumed a great portion of the fifteenth century, and destroyed, it is thought, nearly one half of the nobility and gentry of the country. This long period of civil commotion naturally caused that insecurity of person and property which is always hostile to the advancement of literature. It was too a mere contest for the sovereign power, and as the contending factions were not influenced by any of those feelings which are created by some great public principle being involved in the result, or by any of those motives of action which arouse the national mind to literary exertion, it was also detrimental to the poetic art; indeed, English literature, during the reign of Edward IV., has been considered at its very lowest point of depression.

The accession of Henry VII., however, and the union of the two Houses by his marriage with Elizabeth of York, the undoubted heiress of the Conqueror, seemed to promise a government of stability and endurance. The public confidence thus created had a most beneficial effect, not only upon the agriculture, manufactures, and commerce of the country, but upon its learning also; and although the reign of this monarch cannot boast much of poetical talent, yet the seed was then being sown, which sprang up with vigour in the reign of his son and successor, and brought forth a rich and abundant harvest in that of his youngest grand-daughter.

One illustrious name must however be mentioned, although his fame as a lawyer, a statesman, and a great and good man, has seldom allowed him to be viewed as a poet; yet, as such, Sir Thomas More is considered to have written with purity and elegance, and Doctor Johnson observes,\* that his serious pieces breathe an excellent spirit. His "Serjeant-at-Law playing the Friar," is very humorously done, and Mr. Ellis conjectures, though we must own we do not see upon what grounds, that it might have suggested to Cowper the popular tale of John Gilpin. Sir Thomas More's language is not so obsolete, or so difficult, as that of his predecessors. We fear, by quoting the first verse of the tale, it may be deemed too personally applicable to ourselves, and as reproving us for the attempt to lecture on poetry when we should be attending to other matters;—"conning stanzas when we should engross."

"Wise men alway affirm and say  
That best 'tis for a man,  
Diligently for to apply  
The business that he can;  
And in no wise to enterprise  
In other facultie,  
For he that will and hath no skill  
Shall never learn to *the*." (thrive.)

One of the brightest ornaments of the next reign was Henry, Earl of Surrey, eminent alike for his

Lord  
Surrey,  
b. 1516,  
d. 1547.

\* History of the English Language.

military, civil, and literary accomplishments. His intimate acquaintance with the best authors of Italy, qualified him to reform our national versification. Having travelled into that country, and having, as the writer of the *Arte of English Poetry* observes, tasted its "sweete and statelie measures," he was enabled greatly to polish our rude and homely manner; or as Turberville says,—

"Our mother tongue by him hath got such light  
That ruder speeche thereby is banish'd qwyht."

Lord Surrey's translations of Petrarch are regarded as little inferior to the originals, and those of the 2nd and 4th Books of the *Æneid* as executed, not only with fidelity, but with great spirit and variety. He generally adopted the Italian stanza, which formed the model for Spenser, and has been successfully cultivated by more modern poets. It is said that he introduced the sonnet and blank verse into our language, the latter of which was considered by his contemporaries as a bold, although a praiseworthy innovation.

The comparative merits of rhyme and blank verse have caused much controversy among critics. The former seems natural to poetry, and there is, as Dugald Stewart observes, a pleasure in the recurrence of the same sound. Children and common people, he says, are always fond of it; the one frequently repeating single words that rhyme together, and the other, where the verses are not perfect, often supplying the defect by violating the

common modes of pronunciation. He attributes the pleasure derivable from rhyme partly also to the surprize we feel at the poet's habits of association, by which he is enabled to express himself with elegance and ease under the restraints it imposes.

The origin of rhyme has been much mooted. Some contending that it commenced with the Saracens who took Sicily about the year 820, and others maintaining that it began with the Italian monks of the preceding century; whilst Sir William Jones asserts that rhymes were borrowed from Eastern literature by the poets of Castile and Provence. According to Sharon Turner, however, rhyme was certainly used by Taliessin and the Welsh bards of the sixth century, and, as Dr. Henry asserts, by the Saxon and Danish Scalds. Mr. Turner has, we understand, also shewn that rhyme may be found in the Hebrew, Sanscrit, and Chinese poetry, and that indeed it may be considered as coeval with poetry itself.

Rhyme is peculiarly adapted to gay, witty, humorous, and satirical subjects, and to such as require spirit and vivacity;—to ballads and amatory effusions it seems a necessary adjunct. Although the contrary is perhaps generally believed, yet it is found not to be a more difficult composition than blank verse; indeed, some poets have acknowledged that they could express themselves more easily and more concisely in the former than in the latter, and the learned professor, before referred

to, observes, that among our common poets, a thousand catch the structure of Pope's versification for one that approaches the manner of Milton and Thomson. There is this advantage also in rhyme, that it often suggests a new idea or image; and to this perhaps, Butler alludes, when he says—

“Rhymes the rudders are of verses

With which like ships they steer their courses.”

But to grave and serious subjects, and also to those narratives in which the darker or more violent passions of the human mind are embodied or illustrated, as well as perhaps to solemn, didactic or descriptive poetry, blank verse seems more appropriate and effective. Notwithstanding the opinion of a late noble poet, we should feel it very difficult, with our present impressions, to reconcile ourselves to the notion of *Paradise Lost*, or *The Night Thoughts*, or even *The Seasons*, or *The Task*, being written in rhyme.

Sir T. Wyatt,  
b. 1503.  
d. 1542.

To return, however, from this digression, Lord Surrey had a formidable rival for poetic fame in his contemporary and friend Sir Thomas Wyatt, who had also travelled on the continent, and imbibed a fondness for Italian literature. Wyatt's taste seems to have been of the moral or didactic kind, but he can scarcely be said to deserve the very exaggerated praise of Wood, when he styles him “the delight of the Muses and mankind.” Warton, though he considers him in every respect inferior

to Lord Surrey, as a poet, admits that his poems abound in good sense and correct observations on life, but asserts that they are deficient in pathos and imagination; adding, however, that he may be justly deemed the first of our polished satirists. One of Wyatt's sonnets is addressed to Anne Boleyn, whom, it is said, he passionately admired, and to whom he felt a real attachment, and not like that of Lord Surrey's for "the lovely Geraldine," which is now believed to be one of a mere platonic nature—one which in those days of expiring chivalry was deemed essential for every high born cavalier to possess, and which, without hoping or wishing for an union with its object, imitated or adopted all the fervency of real passion; and that too, sometimes, even for an imaginary being. With the hero of *La Mancha* it was thought that a knight without a mistress was like a tree without fruit, or a body without a soul; and Spenser, when describing the Court of Queen Elizabeth, says,

"Ne any there doth brave or valiant seem,  
Unless that some gay Mistresse's badge he wore."

There were some other poets who lived in the reign of Henry VIII. and who were much distinguished in the court of that extraordinary monarch. Some who flourished before and some contemporary with Surrey and Wyatt. Amongst the former we find the names of Hawes, Barclay, and Skelton; and among the latter, Lord Vaux, Hayward, and Gramaold. Hawes has met with some partial

Other  
Poets.

praise from modern writers, but Barclay seems doomed to general condemnation. Of Skelton, critics, at least modern ones, appear to hold very opposite opinions. Two of them,\* of unquestionable taste and talent, speak of him with contempt, whilst the same number,† of not inferior note, bestow upon him the warmest panegyrics. The great Erasmus, who knew him personally, calls him "*Britannicarum literarum lumen et decus.*" Lord Vaux is much admired as a writer of the lighter kind of poetry, and Hayward of the epigrammatic. Gramaold was our second writer of blank verse, and Warton observes that some of his sententious pieces would have done honor to Pope's ethical epistles.

---

We come now to our second period. There can be little doubt but that the same inquiring spirit which led to the shaking off the yoke of mental bondage in religious matters, had also a considerable effect upon our literature, and eventually gave to it that enlarged independence of thought and expression which, in a short time afterwards, became as conspicuous in our poetry as our prose. It is true that the reformation also gave rise to all kinds of investigation and speculative opinions, as well in metaphysics as theology, and to those scholastic and sectarian controversies which, freed from the authority of the priesthood and the monastery,

\* Hallam and Campbell.

† Gifford and Southey.

engaged the unrestrained attention of almost all the educated classes of society. These, together with the loss of the pomps and ceremonies, and splendid ritual observances of the ancient faith, and the repudiation of the legends and traditions it embodied, are considered by many as having had an unfavourable effect upon our national poetry, and as having impeded its growth. This may perhaps be true to a certain extent, but then there were other circumstances which unquestionably favoured its progress, and more than counter-balanced those disadvantages. The translations of the scriptures and the classics, now rendered more accessible by the invention of printing, and sought after with great avidity, had opened to the nation at large the lofty imagery and sublime strains of the Old Testament, and had unfolded the treasures contained in the writings of the poets and philosophers of pagan antiquity. The nautical discoveries also of the reign of Henry VII. and their immediate results, created a new and wide field for the fancy and imagination to range in; whilst the encouragement given by Henry VIII. to the cultivation of polite literature, and the deep interest taken by Cardinal Wolsey in the education of youth, himself "a scholar, and a ripe and good one," with his munificence in promoting it, had tended much to excite in the minds of the rising generation aspirations after higher subjects than those contained in the tales and ballads of the middle ages.

It is true that the short reign of Edward VI. displayed very little poetical talent, its poetry consisting principally of metrical translations of the Scriptures, such as were exhibited in the well known versions of the Psalms of David, by Sternhold and Hopkins, or of the Acts of the Apostles versified and set to music by Christopher Pye; whilst the sanguinary sway of Mary did not, until nearly its close, produce any poet of name. There then however flourished a very superior one, Sackville Lord Buckhurst. This nobleman had formed the plan of a poem to be entitled *The Mirrour of Magistrates*, in which it was intended that all the illustrious, yet unfortunate characters of the country since the conquest, should seem to pass in review, every one of them recounting, in a separate soliloquy, his own misfortunes. He however wrote only *The Legend, or Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham*, composed, Dr. Aikin says, in a rich, free, and forcible style; and with this he published a kind of poetical introduction, under the title of *Induction*—a word then having a signification synonymous with *Preface*. This work, the *Induction*, displays, it is considered, great vividness of description, fertility of imagination, and strength of language. It is generally of a melancholy and gloomy cast—"a landscape upon which the sun never shines,"—said to be common to all the poetry of that period; caused, as some contend, by the seriousness and reflection incidental

Lord  
Buckhurst,  
b. 1536.  
d. 1606.

to the reformation, or according to others, produced by the effects which the cruelties of the queen had upon the minds of the people.

The Mirrour of Magistrates was continued at first by two persons of the names of Baldwin and Ferrers, who appear to have possessed very respectable talents, and afterwards by Richard Edwardes, one of the contributors to a collection of poems called "The Paradise of Dainty Devices." In this reign too was published one of the first English Georgics, "Tusser's Hondreth Points of Good Husbandrie." There also appeared, under a Spanish title, a panegyrick on Queen Catherine, and Rhodes' Boy Bishop.

Other  
Poets.

But the reign of Elizabeth was one of great literary splendour, and has been called "The Golden Age of English Poetry;" and it may perhaps be considered generally as the brightest era of English literature. The queen herself was a poet, and one of her ditties is deemed by a contemporary, as "passing sweet and harmonical;" but perhaps her eulogist was somewhat of a flatterer, for a modern critic pronounces it "prodigiously bad."

It was in this reign that the muse of Spenser first began to warble her lays. His first work was "The Shepherd's Calendar," a pastoral poem, dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, by whom it was much

Spenser,  
b. 1553.  
d. 1599.

commended; but it is one in which love and polemics are strangely united. The next was his "Epithalamium," called by Mr. Hallam, a splendid little poem, "redolent with a bridegroom's joy, and a poet's fancy." His "Colin Clout's come back again," is a grateful memorial of the enjoyment he experienced whilst in Ireland from the friendship of Sir Walter Raleigh, whom he designates by the name of the Shepherd of the Ocean, and Queen Elizabeth, as Cynthia, the Lady of the Sea. A lively description of the miseries arising from a dependence upon courts and great personages is contained in his "Mother Hubbard's Tale." Spenser wrote several hymns and other pieces of poetry; but his great work,—that upon which his fame is founded, is "The Faerie Queen;"—certainly a very extraordinary performance. It is, as is well known, an allegory throughout, though the whole may be read without perceiving that it is allegorical, and it may therefore be said to possess one of the great qualities of an allegory. But the languor of this class of poetry is very often felt, at least by the present age, which seems to require something more direct and stimulating. A modern foreign writer, whilst denominating Spenser the poet of chivalry, and considering him as possessed of the very spirit of the troubadours, laments that he should in this poem have attempted to classify all the virtues of an ethical system; and Mr. Ellis, whilst comparing its plan with that of an Italian

work of great celebrity, observes that Spenser's heroes want "flesh and blood," and that it is impossible to accompany them to the end of their excursions. Mr. Hume too was also of this opinion, for he says, whilst speaking in his history of this work, that the reading of it is an entertainment with which the palate is soon satisfied, and which becomes a kind of task, thereby proving the tediousness of continued allegory. There is, however, in the poem, particularly in the two first books, which are unanimously acknowledged to be the finest, much invention, imagery at once beautiful and exuberant, originality, and great sweetness and variety of versification, united with a pleasing melancholy and a moral earnestness. The slowness of the stanza, now known by the name of the author, seems well adapted to the subject, and as there are many entire stanzas which are purely poetical embellishments, the languor complained of is oftentimes much relieved.

Spenser, like Chaucer, was an admirer of the Italian poets, but blended the allegorical with the romantic, which Chaucer had repudiated. Not only has Spenser done so, but he has introduced into his poem all the gods and goddesses of the ancients. This however was the fashion of the times, for, as an intelligent French author\* ob-

\* M. Villemain. See his "*Nouveaux Mélanges Historiques et Littéraires*," a translation of which may be found in Dr. Drake's *Memorials of Shakespeare*.

serves, "the court of Queen Elizabeth was a perpetual mythology." When her Majesty visited any nobleman, she was received and saluted by the Penates, or Household Gods—Mercury conducted her into the chamber of honor, and all the metamorphoses of Ovid figured in the pastry of the dessert. The lake of the castle was covered with tritons and nereids, the pages were disguised as nymphs, and when the queen went a hunting she was always accompanied by a Diana. This monstrous mixture of pagan and romantic lore arose probably from the ardent love of ancient literature, which had then become very prevalent, blended with a still lingering attachment to expiring chivalry. According to Bishop Hurd, however, "The Faerie Queen" ought to be read and criticised not as a classical, but as a Gothic poem; for he observes, that when an architect examines a Gothic structure by Grecian rules he finds nothing but deformity, and to the adoption of the latter mode of criticism he attributes that decline in the admiration of Spenser which existed in his day. The due appreciation of the bard has however recently revived, and one of our modern poets pronounces upon him a very enthusiastic panegyric. He was, says Mr. Campbell, the Rubens of English poetry, throwing the soul of harmony into our verse, making it more warmly, tenderly, and magnificently descriptive than it ever was before, and, with few exceptions, than it has ever been since.

Sir Philip Sidney was the friend and patron of Spenser, and ran a short but brilliant career. His pursuits however were so various that he did not devote sufficient time to the Muses, to justify the extravagant encomium of Sir William Temple, when he styles him the greatest poet who ever wrote in our own, or any modern language. Still there are many parts of his "Ashtophel and Stella," a series of amatory poems, recounting the loves of himself and Lady Rich, which are very beautiful, as are some of his sonnets. His "Arcadia" is called by an early editor of the work, "a rare piece of prose-poetry;" or, as Cowper sings, "Sidney, warbler of poetic prose." The celebrated foreign critic, to whom we have recently alluded, whilst speaking of the union of the poetic spirit which distinguished that age, with those visionary thoughts then entertained by minds of the highest order, says, "the life of Sir Philip Sidney was poetry put into action."

Sir P.  
Sidney,  
b. 1554.  
d. 1586.

We are now forced to confess that it is not our intention to introduce any observations on our dramatic literature. We are fully aware that anything approaching to the character of a Lecture on English Poetry, must necessarily be incomplete if this important part of it be omitted; but the subject of itself would form a separate discourse, and we feel ourselves unequal to the task of entering upon or compressing it. Still we find it quite

Shakespeare  
b. 1564.  
d. 1616.

impossible to dwell upon the reign of Elizabeth without a reference to Shakespeare. It would be high treason in the court of Apollo, and banishment for ever from the presence of the Muses would be our mildest punishment. Besides, as Mr. Coleridge observes, Shakespeare had shewn himself a poet previously to his appearance as a dramatist; possessing, as he says, the chief requisites of a poet—deep feeling with an enthusiastic love of nature and natural objects. Whilst therefore it would be inconsistent with our plan to pass over his smaller pieces—his *Venus and Adonis*, profuse with imagery, and, as he himself calls it, “the first born of his imagination;” his *Lucrece* too, and the beautiful songs interspersed throughout his plays; yet, at the same time, it would be incompatible with the respect due to the author’s fame to enlarge upon these, and to pass over with a mere reference the wonderful productions of his dramatic pen

Ben  
Jonson,  
b. 1574.  
d. 1637.

A portion of the foregoing remarks may, in some degree, be applicable to Shakespeare’s friend and fellow dramatist, Ben Jonson; who also, besides his plays, wrote *Penshurst*, a poem which has been much admired, and some other poetical pieces, containing many beauties, with some songs, and amongst the latter, the one to *Celia*, beginning “Drink to me only with thine eyes,” which has been a long standing favorite. During this reign

Other  
Poets.

there flourished also, though of minor importance, a number of poets whose works are deemed to have considerable merit; the two brothers, Giles and Phineas Fletcher, the principal work of the one being a poem called *Christ's Victory*, and that of the other, *The Purple Island*. They were both endowed with poetical minds, and great admirers of Spenser. Marlowe, the author of the well known song\* "*Come live with me and be my love*," the answer to which is said to have been written by Sir Walter Raleigh, whose poetical fame however is lost in the lustre of his higher and more public qualities;—Southwell, a Romish priest, who wrote "*St. Peter's Complaint*," and "*Mary Magdalane's Funeral Tears*."

Towards the end of this queen's reign and during that of her immediate successor, a class of poets arose to whom the name of philosophical didactic, or, according to Dr. Johnson, metaphysical poets, has been given; such as Donne, who, though highly esteemed in his day, fell into disrepute in the last century, but whose works, harsh and full of conceits as they are, have recently been praised, as displaying much learning and caustic wit, with

\* Dr. Warburton, in his notes on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ascribes this song to Shakespeare, but Walton, in his *Complete Angler*, says "it was made by Kit Marlowe, fifty years ago," and that the answer to it which the Milk Maid's Mother sings, was written by Sir Walter Raleigh, adding, "at that time the poetry was old fashioned, but choicely good."—*Hawkins' Edit.*

a rich and picturesque fancy: such as Sir John Davis, who published a celebrated poem on the immortality of the soul, called *Nosce te ipsum*, and Lord Brooke, who wrote three poems, or treatises as they are styled, on Human Learning, Monarchy, and Religion. There were others who have been called narrative poets, such as Daniel, who wrote on the civil wars of York and Lancaster, in which there are some beautiful passages; Drayton, who published his *Barons' Wars*, and afterwards a long poem called *Poly-olbion*, being a topographical description of England, mixed up with a quantity of historical and legendary lore. Sir Walter Scott seems inclined to put Drayton's powers of poetry upon an equality with Spenser's; Mr. Hallam also, speaking of the *Poly-olbion*, asserts that there is no poem of the kind equal in excellence, and expresses his admiration of its learned and highly-gifted author. About this time also there sprang up a very pedantic and hyperbolical mode of expression, under the name of Euphuism, so called from the work of one Lylie or Lilly, entitled *Euphues*. It became very fashionable in the Court of Elizabeth, and was introduced both into our poetry and our prose, but it exhibited such bad taste that it soon expired. It is happily ridiculed by the author of the *Monastery*, in the character of Sir Piercie Shafton. It was also in this reign that an attempt was made to introduce Latin metres into English poetry, or as Lord Orford

neatly observes, "to fetter English verse in Roman chains;" but, although originally patronized by Sidney and Spenser, it proved as abortive as that which our present Poet Laureate made for the same purpose two centuries afterwards.

1841.

There were also, during the period we have just been considering, several works much distinguished in their day; such as Brown's "Brittania's Pastorals"—Beaumont's "Boswell Field"—Warner's "Albion's England"—the satires of Hall, Donne, Marston, and Cleveland—translations of the *Iliad* by Chapman, and of Tasso's *Jerusalem* by Fairfax, the latter of which has been called one of the glories of Elizabeth's reign; and Carew, whose songs and lyrical pieces, displaying great fancy and tenderness, were very popular. But it would be endless to endeavour to enumerate the poets of this reign, whom Dr. Drake estimates at 200; for, as Mr. Price in his preface to Warton's *History*, says, every man in the 16th century seemed to be visited with a call to court the Muse. Some of these, however, flourished in the beginning of the following reign.

James I. himself wished to be distinguished as a favorite of the Nine, and a friend to literary men; but his pedantry and scholastic learning were not likely to improve the national taste, and there was a great dearth of poetical productions in the latter end of his reign. During the Civil Wars men's

minds were too much occupied in the unfortunate occurrences of the times, to make any great sacrifices to the Muses; but before and near to those troubles Milton and Wither, and Cowley, Denham, and Waller, wrote several of their earliest poems. Charles I., too, although partial to the false wit which was then so prevalent amongst the poets, was a man of more taste than his father, and in the early part of his reign was a great friend to literature, patronising Cleveland and Donne, and selecting Ben Jonson for his Poet Laureate.

Milton,  
b. 1608.  
d. 1674.

Milton appears to have been free from the affectation of language, and metaphysical jargon, which were the characteristic of the age. His first works were his Hymn on the Nativity, his Arcades, and his Masque of Comus. The Hymn has been considered as one of the finest in the English tongue. The Arcades contains some very pleasing lines; whilst the purity and the elevation of sentiment, the delicacy, and the beautiful imagery displayed in the Masque, must have shewn to his fellow-countrymen that a great poet had arisen in the land. His Lycidas came next—a monody on the death of his friend, Mr. Edward King, of Cambridge, who was lost in his passage from Chester to Ireland in 1637. It has undergone a minute and severe, and we think a very unjust and hypercritical examination by Dr. Johnson in his life of the author; but we cannot read the poem without

perceiving, though we may not be able to combat, the injustice of his remarks. The enjoyment of this poem is, according to Hallam, a good test of a real feeling for what is peculiarly called poetry.

The Allegro and Penseroso are so well known, and so generally—we may say so universally—admired, that it would be almost a work of supererogation to point out their peculiar beauties. They are said to have been written whilst Milton resided with his father at Horton, in Buckinghamshire, on the banks of the Colne, and where his youthful genius had brought forth the other beautiful progeny we have mentioned. The allusions, the imagery, and the versification of the Allegro and Penseroso are of the most apposite and animated kind, and must ever place them in the highest class of descriptive poems. Even the prejudices of Dr. Johnson were obliged to allow that they were two most noble efforts of the imagination, and Mr. Hallam observes that they satisfy the critics, and delight mankind.

Milton was, however, now doomed to be called from the delightful companionship of the Muse. At about thirty years of age he left his paternal mansion, and travelled in France and Italy for about a twelvemonth, when he returned to England, and became deeply involved in the contention of the times; but, as Dr. Newton observes, speaking of the works we have already noticed, that if he had left no other monuments of his

poetical genius, these would have been sufficient to have rendered his name immortal. It is well known that Milton took the side of the Parliament and the Puritans, though, according to Dr. Hawkins, no man was ever more disqualified to act the part of a Puritan, for all his feelings and associations were those of a Cavalier; but the sentiments of the statesman overcame for a time the prepossessions of the poet. During the Civil Wars and the Protectorate he wrote little but what related to the politics or polemics of the day; yet he left his Muse with regret, and appears to hope that they should meet again "in a still time—not in those noises."

Wither,  
b. 1588.  
d. 1667.

Just before the Rebellion George Wither wrote the best of his poetical pieces—his *Mistresse of Philarete*—a collection of poems that from party feelings (for Wither had entered warmly into the cause of the Parliament) were long afterwards neglected. They have, however, been rescued from oblivion, and received the praises they certainly appear to deserve for felicity of expression, tenderness of feeling, and elevation of mind;\* and Mr. Ellis adds, for playful fancy and pure taste. Amongst the collection is the now fashionable song "Shall I wastynge in despair." Wither afterwards, in the course of a long rambling life, wrote several other pieces which have been often admired, but his compositions in general after he had de-

\* Southey.

voted himself to politics are inferior to the poetry of his earlier days. His *Shepherds Hunting*, however, contains many poetical images and pathetic allusions, and his *Address to his Muse* is, according to Hallam, hardly equalled by any lyric poetry of the first half portion of the 17th century. It was written in prison, and he dwells upon the alleviations which the love of his Muse had conferred upon him.

"She doth tell me where to borrow

"Comfort in the midst of sorrow."

Cowley, though praised perhaps too highly by Addison, Dr. Johnson, and a few others, was undoubtedly a man of great genius and learning, and of a sprightly fancy; but negligent and somewhat harsh in his expressions. His poems are considered as too metaphysical, and his amatory effusions are said to have been drawn more from the head than the heart. His *Anacreontics* are gay and spirited; for, according to Dr. Johnson, his poetical powers were greatest in the familiar and the festive. He was a very amiable man; always a moral, occasionally a feeling writer, and enjoyed almost unrivalled popularity during his life-time. His epic poem, *The Davideis*, is said to be very imperfect, and is often lightly spoken of; but it should be always added that he died before it was finished. His *Puritan and Papist*, and his *Mistresse*, were published, together with his *Miscellanies*, in the early part of his life; but perhaps

Cowley,  
b. 1618.  
d. 1667.

they only tend to confirm what Hume says of him, that "he had no ear for harmony."

Denham,  
b. 1615.  
d. 1688.

Sir John Denham's *Coopers Hill*, published in 1643, has been much lauded by Pope and Goldsmith; but Dr. Johnson does not go to the same lengths of praise, and modern critics seem much divided upon it. Some doubts appear at one time to have been entertained as to its genuineness, and in *The Sessions of the Poets*, printed in Dryden's *Miscellanies*, it is said, "'Twas writ by a vicar who had fifty pounds for it;" but this supposition seems to have been entirely without foundation. *Coopers Hill* is a poem of the descriptive kind; but, according to the fashion of the time, full of argument, philosophy, and sentiment. It is, however, a production of no common sort; and Denham is said, though we believe that the assertion is not admitted by all, to have improved both our language and versification. Pope styles him the "majestic Denham;" but this, Mr. Hallam thinks, conveys too much. Still he admits that his language is well chosen and perspicuous, and that although it is difficult to find lines of eminent beauty in the poem, it is equally so to find any feeble or low ones; whilst Mr. Hume gives it credit for loftiness and vigour.\*

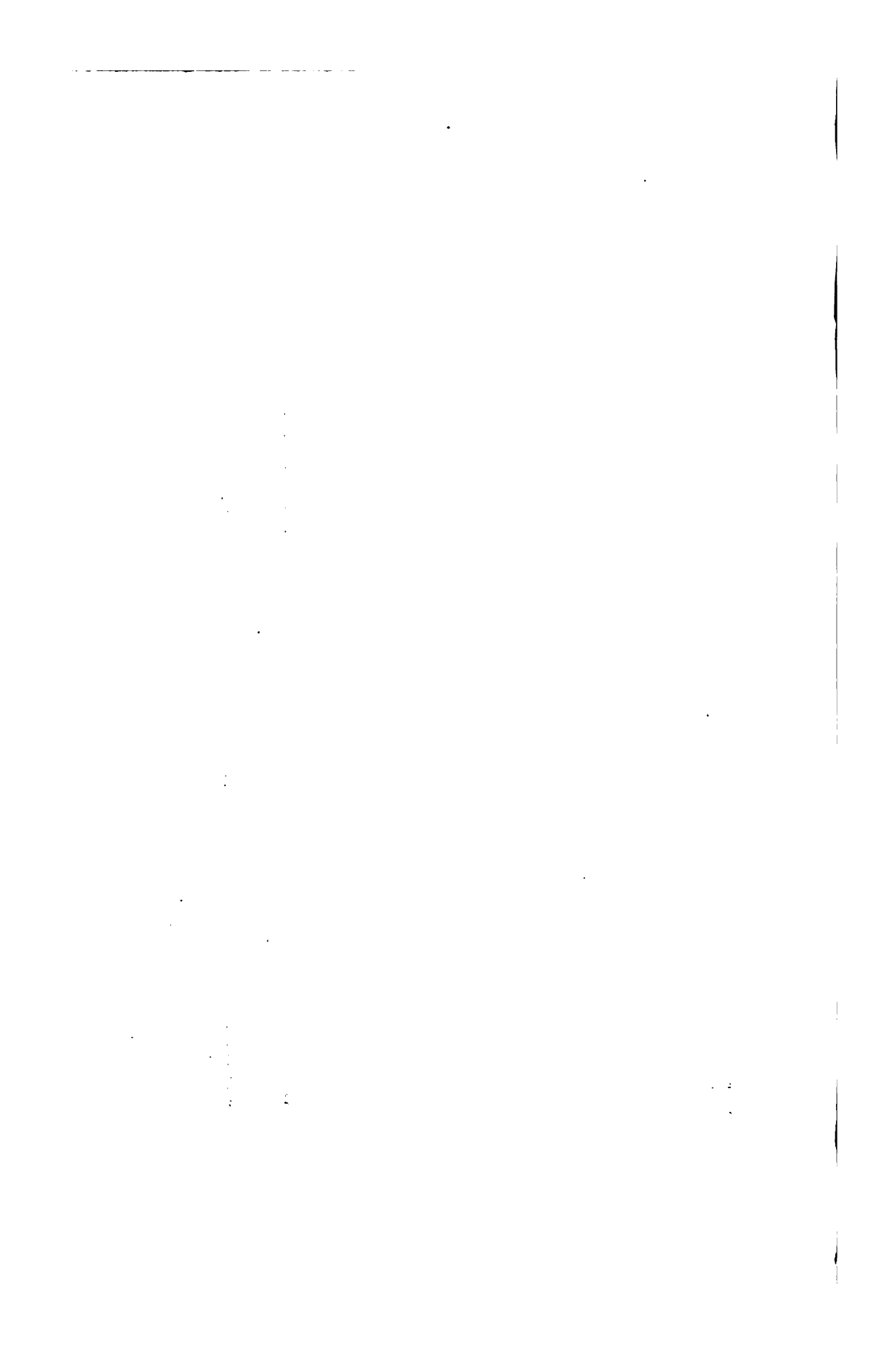
Waller,  
b. 1605.  
d. 1687.

The ease and classical elegance of Waller's writings have been generally and justly, but per-

\* History of the Commonwealth.

haps somewhat too greatly extolled. His larger poem on Divine Love was written, it is said, after he was eighty years of age; but his fame must rest principally upon his shorter pieces. His Panegyric on Cromwell is much praised by Dr. Johnson, who says, "of these lines some are grand, some are graceful, and all are musical." His poetical productions were most of them occasioned by temporary circumstances, and amongst them are his amatory effusions to his celebrated Sacharissa. This beauty was the Lady Dorothea Sidney, upon whom, however, his verses and his wit made no impression. He had little imagination, and, according to the Doctor, is never pathetic, and seldom sublime; but, though marred by the pedantry of the age, he is said to have much improved the mechanism of our metre.

It has been observed by some one, that it can scarcely be believed that only twenty years intervened between the last publication of Spenser and the first of Waller, and yet that the former cannot be read without a glossary, whilst the diction and style of the latter are entirely modern. The same reflection is made by an anonymous publisher of Waller's poems in 1690, who says, very prettily, that the language of the one, like money of that time, is as current now as ever; whilst the other's words are like old coins—we must go to an antiquary to understand their true meaning and value.



## LECTURE II.

DRYDEN, in his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, says, that the civil war buried the Muses under the ruins of the monarchy ; and, indeed, with the exception of Waller's, and his consisting chiefly of complimentary verses to the Protector, and in praise of his government ; and Withers', for, amidst all the toils and troubles of the times, his ceased not to flow, there was little or no poetry after its actual commencement. The classical Republicans, who we might suppose would have endeavoured to arouse the national feeling in their favour, by the publication of patriotic songs and poetic appeals in the cause of freedom, were few in number, and were probably engaged in more urgent matters ; whilst the wit of the Cavaliers only evaporated in bacchanalian catches and loose lampoons against Cromwell and his friends. The fanatic zeal of the Puritans, and of the different sects springing out of them, generally denounced all attachment to elegant literature, and was, as Mr. Hume observes, no less destructive of taste and science than of law and order. Gaiety was proscribed, and human

learning despised, poetry in particular being considered an immoral and almost impious pursuit.

“ The dark and sullen temper of the time  
Deem'd every effort of the muse a crime.”

Milton,  
continued.

Milton, as we before observed, seems to have forsaken his muse when the troubles began, or, as it has been well expressed, to have considered her a mistress too sacred to be introduced into party-brawlings. Soon after the Restoration, however, he successfully renewed his addresses, and the first fruit of the reunion was *Paradise Lost*. The grandeur of conception, the sublimity, and the unvarying majesty which so much distinguish this great epic, have been often and justly extolled by the most able and judicious commentators. It is true that it has encountered the affected sneers of Dryden, the captious querulousness of Pope, and the ridicule of Voltaire; but it met with early admirers amongst the great poet's contemporaries; and even Dryden himself, in the first flow of his feelings, could not help uttering an exclamation in praise of its author. It was afterwards beautifully vindicated by Addison, and has recently received their tribute of applause from Coleridge and Campbell, whose elegant critical eulogiums, particularly those of the latter, should be perused by all.

It has been sometimes observed, that Milton was unfortunate in the choice of the subject of his

great poem. His own natural bias and early associations would no doubt have led him to select one in which chivalry or romance should have been the predominant features—one in which he could have sung of “knights and barons bold”—

“Of forests and enchantments drear,  
Where more is meant than meets the ear.”

Indeed, it is said that he had, at one time, fixed upon King Arthur as his hero\*; but probably he was deterred from carrying into effect this resolution, either by the general apathy which was then shewn to such subjects; or, perhaps, was influenced to pursue the one he eventually adopted by the fondness for theological and scriptural topics which still existed amongst the Presbyterian party, and of which Milton himself had, during the Protectorate, largely partaken. The German writer,

\* This has been inferred from some lines amongst Milton's Latin productions.\*

“Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,  
*Arturumque* etiam sub terris bella moventem !  
Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere meusæ  
Magnanimos heroas.”

*Mansus.*

“Tum gravidam *Arturo*, fatali fraude, Iðgernen,  
Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlois arma,  
*Merlini dolus.*”

*Epitaphium Damonis.*

\* Appendix F.

to whom we have before referred, whilst lamenting that Milton, as well as his own countryman, Klopstock, had done themselves injustice, by choosing subjects which they could not adequately describe, says, that the invisible world, the Deity, and pure intellect, can never, upon the whole, be represented by us ; and that nature and human beings are the proper and immediate subjects for poetry. Mr. Addison seems to have been impressed with the same opinion, when he observes, that if Milton's majesty forsakes him any where, it is in those parts in which the divine persons are introduced as speakers. Schlegel adds, too, that when compared with his models, Dante and Tasso, Milton laboured under considerable disadvantages by being, as a Protestant, denied the use of a great many symbolical representations, histories, and traditions ; and somewhat blames him for endeavouring to supply the defect, by having recourse to fables and allegories taken from the Koran and the Talmud ; but, notwithstanding these difficulties and objections, it is probably true, as one of the most elegant of his panegyrical critics affirms, that, " taking the subject all in all," his powers could no where else have enjoyed the same scope.

Paradise Regained has generally been deemed a comparative failure—" the Odyssey after the Iliad ;" although a few, and amongst them the late accomplished Lord Holland, have preferred it to the Paradise Lost. Warton considered it as nothing

inferior, and the author himself would never admit that it was so. It has been maintained, that the survey of Greece and Rome, and the description of the thunder-storm in the Wilderness, are equal to any passages in its great predecessor, whilst its pure precepts and simplicity of diction cannot be too much admired.

Milton was somewhat imbued with the fondness of the former age for the literature of Italy, and wrote many sonnets in its favorite stanza; but in this department he has been generally pronounced unsuccessful. The mention of this failure reminds us of the reply made by Dr. Johnson to Hannah More, on expressing to him her wonder that the poet who had written *Paradise Lost*, should write such poor sonnets. "Milton, Madam, was a genius that could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones." The same authority, at another time, speaking of the stanza, observes that, however well adapted it may be to the Italian language, it has never succeeded in ours. In his great works, however, the good taste and natural fertility of our poet's mind broke through all the spells of his partiality, and he there adopted a style and manner peculiarly his own. The last of those works was his *Samson Agonistes*, in which there is no doubt, grandeur and vigour, and an admirable moral feeling, but it is far less poetical than either of his two epics. It is, as Mr. Hallam observes, "The ebb of a mighty tide."

Butler,  
b. 1612.  
d. 1680.

Butler's *Hudibras* is full of wit and of learned and political allusions; but his wit, it has been remarked, is too dazzling to be delightful. His allusions, too, when learned, are far-fetched; and, when political, are, at the present time, too obscure to be interesting. The first part of the poem was published in 1663, and is, as is also the remainder of it, a burlesque satire on the English Puritans, against whom he appears to have had a great aversion, and whose manners and character certainly offered a fair subject for ridicule. Many of his lines are often quoted as sage or humorous adages, but the work itself is seldom read through.

Duke of  
Buckingham.  
ham.

One of the poets of Charles the Second's days, was the Duke of Buckingham, whose principal work, his *Essay on Poetry*, has been very oppositely treated by celebrated men. Johnson and Warton, in opposition to Pope and Addison, considering it insipid, and the author as wanting the fancy or imagination of a poet, whilst Dryden ranks the essay amongst the best of our didactic pieces.

Dryden,  
b. 1631.  
d. 1700.

But now "The High Priest of all the Nine," as he has been called, demands our attention. Although an early favorite of the Muses, Dryden did not make known the gifts he had received from them until he was thirty years of age, and did not arrive at the meridian of his glory until he was fifty; but from that time until his death he shone

with the most brilliant lustre. He had great original genius, was rapid in conception, spirited and vigorous in execution, and his language, which is never laboured, is affluent to profusion. His poetry, however, is said to be deficient in sensibility, and in portraying the tenderer passions of the soul—seldom borrowing images from nature, or rising to sublimity, and never pathetic. It is, however, of great variety—satirical, descriptive, allegorical, political, narrative, and lyrical,—grave and gay,—argumentative and philosophical, and displaying great powers of reasoning; indeed, “reasoning in rhyme” is said to have been his delight.

Dryden’s first elaborate production was his *Annus Mirabilis*, being a poetical account of the year 1666. His *Absalom and Achitophel*, accounted his greatest work, is a severe allegorical satire on the contrivers and abettors of Monmouth’s disaffection. Besides its acknowledged poetical power, it shews the surprising skill and ingenuity of the author. The adaptation of Scripture-names to the real characters, and of the incidents of the Jewish history, to the several circumstances connected with Monmouth’s situation, are admirable. His *Religio Laici* is a theological discussion in verse, in which Dr. Johnson observes, that the metre has neither weakened the force, nor clouded the perspicuity of the argument, and which, though prosaic in some parts, rises to high poetry in others. It shews, also, that Dryden’s religious notions were

then very unsettled ; and though the poem is obviously written to defend the Church of England against the Sectarians, yet it has been thought that his bias to the Church of Rome might be easily discernible in it. To that church he, on the accession of James, became a convert, and in defence of its tenets against those of the church he had left, he published his celebrated work, *The Hind and the Panther*, in which the former church is represented by a milk-white hind, and the latter by a panther, "a beautiful beast but spotted." It has been observed, that beasts holding discourses on theology is a clumsy contrivance ; for what, it has been asked, can be more absurd than that one of them should advise the other to rest her faith upon a pope or a council.

After the Revolution, which deprived him of his Laureateship, he wrote his *Mac Flecknoe* ; and, in the year 1693, translated *Juvenal* and *Persius*, and, in a few years afterwards, *Virgil*, which, though vigorous and spirited, is notwithstanding considered as giving an inadequate representation of the Roman bard. About this time also he wrote his *Imitations of Chaucer*, and published translations from *Ovid*. His *Alexander's Feast* is generally admitted to be the finest ode in the English language, though Dr. Johnson seems doubtful whether the preference ought not to be given to that on the death of Mrs. Killigrew ; in one place asserting that the *Alexander's Feast* stood without a rival, and again con-

sidering the other as the noblest one this country ever produced. The same authority adds, that Dryden had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley, and applies to English poetry improved by him (though the correctness of the illustration might well be doubted) what was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, that "he found it of brick and left it of marble."

In addition to these works, and besides a satirical piece, called the Medal, which we have accidentally omitted to notice, Dryden wrote many songs and plays, but they are all of them tainted with that indelicacy and licentiousness, which pervaded and disgraced the press and the stage at that period, and which are supposed by some to have been as detrimental to polite literature, as the cant and hypocrisy that prevailed during the Usurpation. It is indeed much to be regretted that Dryden should have lived in the dissolute and spiritless reign of Charles II., and that his poverty should have prevented his exerting the powers of his mind, and the boldness and originality of his imagination, unrestricted by the caprice or bad taste of others. It is believed that he had planned an epic poem of the romantic class—"a knightly tale of Albion's earlier day," or some great work, which, had he been placed in other circumstances, he would probably have executed, and which would have been more worthy of his genius and his name

than many of those he has left behind him ; but  
alas !

“ A ribald king and court  
Bade him toil on to make them sport ;  
Demanded for their niggard pay,  
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,  
Licentious satire, song and play ;  
The world defrauded of the high design,  
Profaned the god-given strength, and marr'd the lofty line.”

Minor  
Poets.

Although Dryden held the supreme sway over our poetry from the death of Milton, in 1674, to his own death, on the last day of the 17th century, yet the names of Cleveland, Roscommon, Mulgrave, Blackmore, Pomfret, Cotton, and Dorset may be mentioned amongst the poets who distinguished themselves about this time. Garth, too, who wrote his *Claremont* and his *Dispensary*, the latter work being much celebrated in its day, but now little read ; and Yalden, whose *Hymn to Darkness* shows some vigour of imagination ; Oldham ranking next to Dryden as a satirist ; Hughes, the author of the *Birth of the Rose* and *Ecstasy* ; the graceful and witty Sedley ; and Rochester ; whose varied genius was so perversely employed.

Prior,  
b. 1666.  
d. 1771.

Prior also distinguished himself about the time of the Revolution. His first publication was the *City Mouse* and the *Country Mouse*, written in ridicule of Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, and designed as a parody on that poem. He was not, it

is said, the sole author, Charles Montague, a celebrated wit, having contributed a portion of it. His next work was his *Carmen Seculare*, in praise of King William ; but his most admired one is his *Henry and Emma*, grounded upon a very ancient ballad, called the "Nut-brown Maid," written, some say, as early as the 15th century. Johnson harshly designates *Henry and Emma* as a dull and tedious dialogue, neither exciting esteem for the man, nor tenderness for the woman. Prior, however, is generally considered as one of the most correct of English poets, although it is admitted that his numbers want airiness and facility.

Parnell also deserves a separate notice as a poet, who, according to Dr. Johnson, is sprightly without effort, and always delightful ; and whose language, Goldsmith says, is the language of life, conveying the warmest thoughts in the simplest expressions. He wrote a pleasing fairy legend, called *Edwin of the Green*, but his principal production is "The Hermit," a moral, impressive, and very attractive tale, written with great elegance and feeling. Goldsmith considers it to have been of Arabian origin ; and this may be so, but Parnell no doubt took it from the 80th chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum*, where the incidents of the tale are very minutely related. This work, the *Gesta Romanorum*, was originally written in Latin, by Berchorius, a Benedictine monk, who died about

Parnell,  
b. 1679.  
d. 1717.

the middle of the 14th century, but it has been frequently translated, and is full of fictitious narratives, allegories, and legendary tales. Warton says, that it operated powerfully on the general body of our old poetry, affording a variety of inventions not only to Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, but to their distant successors. It is said that Shakespeare took from one of the chapters the scenes of the Bond and the Caskets in the Merchant of Venice; and, according to Mr. Dunlop, in his History of Fiction, the story of King Lear may be found in another, though we cannot find any chapter that bears a resemblance to it; and besides that the story of King Lear is fully told in Geoffery's History. But to return to our author. The incidents of the tale are, however, much enriched and embellished by the author's genius and fancy, of which he certainly possessed both, although, perhaps, it will be thought that Dr. Johnson may have in some degree made the truth bend to the antithesis, when he thus speaks of Parnell's works,—“It is impossible to say whether they are the productions of nature, so excellent as not to want the help of art, or of art so refined as to resemble nature;”—however, the Doctor's authority is strengthened by that of a recent critic\*, fully capable of appreciating poetical merit, and he observes, that the studied happiness of the poet's diction does not spoil its simplicity, and beautifully compares his

\* Campbell.

poetry to the flower "that has been trained and planted by the skill of the gardener, but which preserves in its cultivated state the natural fragrance of its wilder air."

Phillips' *Splendid Shilling* is a parody on Milton's style, and is one of the earliest attempts at that mode of writing. It was much celebrated on its publication, and is very ingeniously done. Sir Richard Blackmore's *King Arthur*, and *The Creation*, are accounted respectable performances, and may be also considered as belonging to our present period.

We now come to one who, if not as of right, certainly in point of time and by the authority of popular suffrage, may be deemed Dryden's successor to the poetic throne of these realms. The celebrated poet to whom we are referring was born in 1688, and very early exhibited that precociousness of talent which raised him to the eminence he afterwards attained. "Poeta nascitur," if true, may be truly said of Pope—"he lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." Pope's earliest favorites were Spenser and Waller, but Dryden soon became his model. His first productions—his *Pastorals*, *Essay on Criticism*, *Messiah*, and *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*, were all much admired by the critics of the day. His next was the *Rape of the Lock*, and the very ingenious introduction of pre-

Pope,  
b. 1688.  
d. 1744.

ternatural agents, borrowed, as is supposed, from the day dreams of the Rosicrucians, has been celebrated as one of the most skilful exhibitions of the poetic art. The Temple of Fame, which, as Steele observes, contains a thousand beauties, was followed by his Epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, a production deservedly praised for its passion, its pathos, and its elegance. It was said that he was induced to write it from a perusal of Prior's Henry and Emma, and Dr. Johnson gives it the preference, adding, as a reason, that the gloom of the convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of the grove. Whether the Doctor be right in his principle we cannot say, but we do not see the grounds upon which the supposition of its being suggested by the perusal of the work referred to can be supported, as the two poems do not appear to bear any relative resemblance. Pope's translations of the Iliad and the Odyssey were undertakings of great labour, and added much to his fame. Johnson calls the former a poetical wonder. It has, however, been considered by many as by far too free and paraphrastical. His famous satirical poem, The Dunciad, he began in 1727; and although, no doubt, the satire was very strong and pungent, yet in consequence of some of the characters and many of the allusions being unknown, or not understood by the general reader of the present day, the sting or point of the poem is now much diminished; but the terseness and

condensed nature of his language, and probably his own natural disposition, were well calculated for satirical writing. His character of Addison, under the name of Atticus, whether true or false, is considered as one of the finest pieces of satire ever written.

In 1733, Pope published his *Essay on Man*. It is generally supposed that the notorious Lord Bolingbroke supplied the often-condemned principles of this celebrated poem, and that Pope was the mere versifier of them; but this has been, with apparently good reason, denied by others; and Warburton, in writing to Hurd, refers to a letter, just then published, as a full refutation of the invidious report. On those principles we shall not make any comment. We have only to admire the poem for the splendour of its imagery, its dignified simplicity, its lucid brevity, its condensation of thought, and the applicability of its metaphors and illustrations, with the elegance and melody of its spirited versification,—all blended together

“ In one bright beauty, one collected blaze.”

His *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* is certainly much inferior to Dryden's. His smaller pieces all partake of the general character of his poetry for elegance and harmony; and his *Moral Essays* are full of sagacious observations. Of his *Essay on Criticism*,

Dr. Johnson asserts that it places him amongst the first of critics and of poets, as it exhibits every excellence that can adorn didactic composition ; and, speaking of him generally, he says, that he had the three great requisites of poetry, invention, imagination, and judgment; and to this we may, as to style, add correctness of ear, elegance of language, compactness and strength of expression, with a most refined and harmonious versification.

And yet Pope's title to a high rank amongst our poets has been impugned, and his possessing true poetic taste and feelings not only questioned but sometimes denied. This heresy, as it would certainly have been thought a century ago, has been recently spreading and obtaining many adherents. It gave rise some years ago to a very interesting, though not very amicable, discussion, between some modern critics and poets,—Mr. Southey, The Rev. Mr. Bowles, and Mr. Roscoe, maintaining the new doctrines; and Lord Byron, Campbell, and Mr. Crabbe, vindicating the poetic character of their favorite bard. But we shall not attempt, nor should we, even had we ability for the task, to enter into the merits of the controversy, or to detain you with any observations on the comparative obligations which Poetry owes to Nature and to Art, or to descant upon its “invariable principles.” We have alluded to the discussion, merely for the purpose of bringing it before your notice ;

and, having done so, we shall only take the opportunity of avowing our subscription to the old orthodox creed :

Amongst the contemporaries of him whose works we have just been noticing, are some names of great celebrity,—Addison, Young, Swift, Gay, Thomson, and Akenside.

Addison distinguished himself at college by his Latin compositions, and by a translation of one of the Georgics. He afterwards wrote a panegyric on one of King William's campaigns, and a poetical epistle to Lord Halifax. By desire of the then Ministry he wrote his Campaign to celebrate the Battle of Blenheim. Of this poem, Dr. Johnson says, that the language is polished and pure, and that it is the product of a mind too judicious to commit faults, but not sufficiently vigorous to attain excellency. It has, however, been called a mere Gazette in rhyme. The verses to Sir Godfrey Kneller, on his picture of George I., shew great ingenuity, and, if we may so call it, poetical dexterity. The parallel between the succession of the English Monarchs from the Restoration, and of a portion of the Greek Mythology, has, perhaps, never been surpassed.\* But all Addison's poetry seems to partake of the nerveless elegance and

Addison,  
b. 1672.  
d. 1719.

\* Appendix Note G.

tame correctness which, with few exceptions, were then prevalent, and which is often attributed to the influence of what is called The French School of Poetry.

Young,  
b. 1681.  
d. 1765.

Young wrote many things besides his famous *Night Thoughts*, but, with the exception of that work, and the play of *The Revenge*, few of his productions are much read. Schlegel observes, that didactic poetry has always been a favorite with the English, and that its common materials are often compounded with the more poetical elements of passion and melancholy; as, for instance, he says, "in the gloomy and enthusiastic Young." However applicable these epithets may be to his poetry, Young is considered as not having had much personal enthusiasm. His melancholy is considered as affected, and his tenderness unnatural. Dr. Johnson, though severe upon the general conduct of Young, speaks very favorably of his *Night Thoughts*. "They exhibit," he says, "a very wide display of original poetry, with deep reflections, and striking allusions,—a wilderness of thoughts in which the fertility of fancy scatters flowers of every hue and of every odour." Though himself so partial to rhyme, the Doctor says that here blank verse is properly used; and he concludes his eulogium, by adding, "particular lines are not to be regarded, the power is in the whole, and in the

whole there is a magnificence like that ascribed to a Chinese plantation—the magnificence of extent and endless diversity.”

When Swift shewed Dryden some of his earliest compositions in verse, the venerable bard said, “Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet;” and it will probably be thought that there was some truth in this candid, but ungracious observation; for it must be admitted, that to the higher regions of poetry Swift never rose, perhaps, never aspired; yet in the walks of wit, humour, and satire, he has had few rivals. His versification, too, is easy, flowing, and correct; full of vivacity, and free from affectation. His *Cadenus and Vanessa*, one of the longest of his poetical pieces, is not, moreover, tainted with that indelicacy which frequently disgraces many of his productions, and fills the reader with a disgust that is often increased by the acrimony and ill-nature which so often pervade them.

Swift,  
b. 1667.  
d. 1744.

But Thomson is a bard claiming more of our notice. His style is quite original, and his blank verse, with its solemn and sonorous periods, is eminently suitable to the depicting of *The Seasons*—the work upon which his fame is principally founded. His poetical images are there all drawn from nature, and most of them, probably, from personal observation; for it is reported, that he was accustomed to wander alone for days and weeks into the

Thomson,  
b. 1700.  
d. 1748.

country. Gibbon observes, that conversation enriches the understanding, but that solitude is the school of genius ; and, according to the celebrated foreigner to whom we have so often referred, every great poet has been a lover of solitude. Although, no doubt, there have been exceptions to the latter position, yet it must be acknowledged, that the poet who attempts to paint rural scenes, should see them with his own eyes, before he can accurately or distinctly represent them to others, and without doing so, can scarcely adorn them with original images.

Of the four Books on The Seasons, his Winter was first written, and is generally considered the best. It may, indeed, be truly said, that that season of the year, with all its sombre and cheerless appearance, is more in consonance with a poetic mind than the three others, or certainly more than the two first. In Spring and Summer all nature seems teeming with joyfulness, and fit only for gay description and happy images, except, perhaps, on the happening of some fearful event, as in that of the thunder-storm, in the beautiful and affecting episode of Celadon and Amelia ; but amid the clouds and winds and storms of winter, the mind receives its most ennobling impulses, and by the very dreariness and desolation of the season, is forced back into communion with itself, and raised far above the flowery pleasures of the world.

On this work, The Seasons, as we said before,

Thomson's fame principally rests; for his *Liberty*, although he himself considered it as the best of his productions, is dull and monotonous; and his *Castle of Indolence*, with all its exquisite imagery, its pure diction, and melodious versification, seems too allegorical for the present day. We must not, however, be so ungrateful as to forget his noble and patriotic song of "*Rule Britannia*," or omit to mention his pious and sublime Hymn at the end of *The Seasons*.

Dr. Johnson, though he awards Thomson considerable praise, of which he is not over lavish in his poetical criticisms, deems his style somewhat too exuberant, and as filling the ear rather than the mind. Thomson, however, had a warm imagination, with feeling and sensibility, great elevation of sentiment, and a grateful impression of the benevolence of the Deity; and he certainly contributed to produce that fondness for the description of natural scenery, as actually existing, which many of his contemporaries could not understand. He was, as Collins calls him, *The Poet of Nature*.

" And lives there one whose heedless eye  
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near;  
With him, sweet Bard, may Fancy die,  
And Joy desert the blooming year."

Gay wrote at first a sprightly tale, called *Trivia*, or the *Art of Walking the Streets*, and six *Pastorals*, called *The Shepherd's Week*. He afterwards

Gay,  
b. 1686.  
d. 1732.

wrote his Fables, some of which are very ingenious and much admired, and from which quotations are still frequently made. He was also the author of the Beggar's Opera, containing many clever songs, though we do not now fully comprehend their allusions ; and of the popular ballad of Black-eyed Susan.

Medical  
Poets.  
Akenside,  
Armstrong,  
and  
Grainger.

It has been said, that the medical profession is unpropitious to poetry, but the names of Akenside, Armstrong, and Grainger are powerful in proving the inaccuracy of the assertion. Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination shews that he possessed considerable poetical fancy and taste ; and Armstrong, in his Art of Preserving Health, has adorned a most unpoetical subject with imagery and feeling. Grainger's Ode on Solitude is much praised by Johnson and Percy ; and his Junio and Theana is a very affecting story.

Dyer,  
b. 1700.  
d. 1770.

Dyer's Grongar Hill is a pleasing description of some beautiful scenery in Carmarthenshire, and is generally admired ; but his Ruins of Rome, and his Fleece, have experienced a different fate, though the last, notwithstanding its being denounced by Dr. Johnson, was much recommended by Armstrong, and has received the praises of a well-known poet of the present day. About this time, Tickell wrote his Kensington Gardens, the fiction of which is unskilfully composed of Gre-

Other  
Poets.

cian deities, and Gothic fairies; and Broome and Fenton assisted Pope in the translation of the *Odyssey*. Fenton's Ode to Lord Gower was much esteemed.

Falconer's *Shipwreck* is an interesting and affecting tale, founded upon a real occurrence which happened off Cape Colonna, where a British merchant vessel was wrecked, the author himself being aboard—"pars magna fui," as his motto goes. The sea-phrases and nautical language may not be very pleasing to the ear of a landsman (though Lord Byron, in his controversy with Mr. Bowles, speaks of these terms of art as having a poetical effect), yet they are said to be very skilfully drawn, and scientifically introduced. There is not much energy in the language, or elegance in the versification, but the descriptions are natural, and some of them very affecting:

Falconer,  
b. 1730.  
d. 1769.

"When in the dead of night by Lonna's steep,  
The seaman's cry was heard along the deep."

Falconer wrote some smaller pieces, and the sailor's favorite song, "Cease rude Boreas," has been given to him.

The disadvantages under which Savage laboured, in consequence of the unnatural cruelty of his mother, is affectingly portrayed by his friend and contemporary—born, as Dr. Johnson says, and

Savage,  
b. 1698.  
d. 1743.

launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed up by its quicksands, or dashed upon its rocks. He, however, displayed, at an early period, his poetical powers; for when only twenty-one he wrote *The Wanderer*, abounding with strong representations of nature, and just observations on life; and very soon afterwards his more celebrated poem, *The Bastard*. The spirited allusions to his own extraordinary situation, which was then well known, the novelty of the subject, and the vigour displayed in the execution, rendered it at the time very popular. He afterwards published his *Progress of a Divine*, with the *Volunteer Laureate*, and a few others, which, however, did not add much to his fame.

Dr. Johnson,  
b. 1709.  
d. 1784.

But we must not forget the great critic himself. Dr. Johnson began his literary career about the time Pope had ceased to write. It is said that Pope read his *London*, and spoke highly in its praise. That poem, and also *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, have met with the panegyrics of more modern bards. They both, unquestionably, give him a considerable rank amongst our poets; but perhaps his fame as an essayist, as a critic, and a lexicographer, his learning, and the force and integrity of his character, have attached to them an importance which they would not otherwise have obtained. The verse is harmonious, and the sentiments are of that energetic,

spirited, and masculine kind, which were so consonant to his nature, and are, like his prose, polished and sonorous; but there is no novelty, and little of imagination, in either.

Collins' writings never enjoyed that popularity in the author's life-time which they have done since. This early neglect of them seems very unaccountable, superior as they were to the general poetry of the day; for, although there were about this time some pleasing poets,\* distinguished for elegance, ease, and correctness, yet they all partook of the tameness, which, making a few exceptions, must be considered as characteristic of that period. His Odes and Oriental Eclogues display considerable powers of imagination, rich and picturesque fancy, with fine natural feeling and sensibility, and couched in chaste, and nervous, and oftentimes splendid diction. We may particularly point out his Ode on the Passions, on Evening, and his Elegy to the Memory of the Author of the Seasons. His Dirge in Cymbeline has been often admired, and is one, it has been said, which none but a true poet could write; whilst Dr. Drake allots to him, although, no doubt, somewhat hyperbolically, all the magic wildness of Shakespeare, the sublimity of Milton, and the pathos of Ossian.

Collins,  
b. 1720.  
d. 1756.

\* Appendix Note H.

Collins possessed highly susceptible feelings : the disappointment he experienced at the neglect with which his works were treated by the public, after destroying his spirits, seems at length to have unsettled his intellects ; for he is described, whilst residing at Chichester, his native place, and where he finished his brief career, as frequently pacing the aisles of its cathedral, and listening to the music in a state of great mental depression, which sometimes vented itself in sobs and sighs, and sometimes burst forth in paroxysms of temporary frenzy.

“ With woeful measures wan Despair  
Low sullen sounds his grief beguiled,  
A solemn, strange, and mingled air,  
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.”\*

Warton and Gray were friends and contemporaries. Their poetry has been sometimes compared ; and sometimes, though not often, the preference has been given, but we think unjustly, to the former. Warton wrote several poems. His *Pleasures of Melancholy* was his earliest ; and, considering that it was written when the author was only nineteen years old, we cannot withhold from it our admiration. Many of his images, and oftentimes his phraseology, are borrowed, no doubt, from some of the eminent poets who preceded him ; and his thoughts and turns of expression may be of Miltonic origin, though

Warton,  
b. 1728.  
d. 1790.  
and  
Gray,  
b. 1716.  
d. 1771.

\* Ode on the Passions.

these have been, we think, hypercritically and unnecessarily pointed out by his, now Right Reverend, Biographer. His Laureat Odes have all the tameness of official drudgery, nor do his humorous pieces exhibit any happy specimens of wit or ridicule; but his *Crusade*, and *Grave of King Arthur*, indicate very considerable poetical talent. We cannot, however, put them in competition with the *Bard*, or *Elegy*, or the *Progress of Poetry* of Gray. With equal learning, and less of obscurity, Warton had not the delicacy or energy of his friend, or the harmony or variety of his versification. He was, however, strongly tinctured with the spirit of our elder poets; and we must ever acknowledge the obligation English Poetry owes him for his learned and laborious account of its early history.

We have always thought Dr. Johnson's remarks on Gray's poetry very unfair, and very prejudiced, if not invidious; and we have been recently much pleased in finding our opinion confirmed by that of the late Sir James Mackintosh, who considers it "a monstrous example of critical injustice." His minute verbal dissection of the *Prospect of Eton College* and the *Bard* amounts almost to puerility; but, with all his (must we say it?) vindictive spirit, he is obliged to confess the poetic beauties of *The Elegy*—and full of beauties it undoubtedly is. Its popularity was immediate, and has been steady and permanent. As an in-

stance of the early admiration it excited, we cannot refrain from mentioning an anecdote told of General Wolfe, who, whilst visiting some outposts on the eve of a battle expected to be decisive of the campaign, recited, as the boat sailed along, the whole Elegy to the officer who sat next to him, adding, "I would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow."\*

Sir James Mackintosh considers that Gray attained the highest degree of splendour of which the poetic style seems capable; and Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, says that Gray joined to the sublimity of Milton the elegance and harmony of Pope, and that, had he written a little more, he might have been deemed the first poet in the English language. His style, however, has been charged with being too much labored, and too highly adorned, and some of his Odes with being too obscure; but then it is replied that his subjects required the mode of writing he has adopted. He wrote several small pieces besides those to which we have before referred:—The Hymn to Adversity, Odes on Spring and on Music, The Fatal Sisters, The Descent of Odin, and The Death of Owen, with some few others, which were published after his death. It has been sometimes thought that the sublime genius and consummate

\* Playfair's Life of Robison.

art of Gray tended to produce a great change in our poetical compositions, and to break down the French or Continental School, as it was called. Indeed, the fire and energy of his style were quite inconsistent with its trammels.

“ Hark ! his hands the lyre explore ;  
 Bright-eyed Fancy hov’ring o’er,  
 Scatters from her pictur’d urn  
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.”\*

Mason, also the friend of Gray, as well as his biographer, distinguished himself when at college by a Monody on the Death of Pope, and afterwards obtained considerable celebrity by the publication of his *English Garden*, which Warton pronounced to be the perfection of didactic poetry ; but we presume so bold a panegyric will not meet with universal acquiescence. Mason was, however, most indebted for his fame to his dramatic writings. To these, indeed, we should not here allude, were we not desirous of drawing your attention to the beautiful out-pourings of the choruses in his *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*. Although his style is somewhat stiff and formal, yet there is much richness in his language, with a full flow of imagination. He is ascertained to have been the anonymous author of *The Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers*,—a much talked-of poem in its day.

Mason,  
 b. 1725.  
 d. 1797.

\* Progress of Poesy.

Mason lived a long life, which extended itself even beyond the commencement of our next period, and wrote some Odes, and other pieces; but they did not add to his fame, although some of them, as his Address to a Young Nobleman, are very pleasing.

Chatterton,  
b. 1752.  
d. 1770.

In the course of our present period a very strange literary imposture was attempted by a young man, undoubtedly of great natural talents, but, unfortunately, imbued with that utter thoughtlessness which is so frequently their concomitant. Chatterton, a native of Bristol, published a series of poems, which he represented as the productions of one Rowley, a monk of the 15th century, and which he asserted had been taken by his (Chatterton's) father from the muniment room in Ratcliffe Church. On their being submitted to Horace Walpole, he at once denied their genuineness, as did also Gray and Warton. Sir Walter Scott observes, that whoever would imitate language with success, should attend rather to its grammatical character, its turn of expression, and mode of arrangement, than labour to collect antiquated terms. In this, however, Chatterton failed. Still he was a youth of extraordinary intellectual powers, endowed with a poetical genius, and of a romantic imagination, as some of his early works, written prior to the forgeries, and as even the forgeries themselves, prove him to have been. He

committed suicide in 1770. Had he reached a maturer age, Warton thinks that he would have proved one of the first of English poets. Wordsworth calls him "a marvellous boy."

Churchill has been called the British Juvenal, and he certainly is one of the keenest and most sarcastic of our satirists. He was possessed of both wit and humour, and these he exercised without any feelings of pity or relentlessness towards the objects of them. His style is very energetic, but does not possess much elegance or refinement;

Churchill,  
b. 1741.  
d. 1764.

"Surly and slovenly, and bold and coarse."\*

One of his principal works, *The Rosciad*, he published in 1761, and it has been considered as his best. It was followed by *The Apology*, and *Night*, but these did not add much to the author's credit. His *Prophecy of Famine* was, however, much extolled, and sought after. In his *Ghost*—to which the famous *Cock Lane* story, of which you have no doubt heard, gave rise—he makes a very severe attack upon Dr. Johnson, under the name of *Pomposo*. He soon afterwards published his *Gotham*, and some other works. Notwithstanding the faults which Cowper, in the foregoing quotation, finds with Churchill's style, he speaks

\* *Table Talk*.

of his *Gotham* as a noble and beautiful poem, and a masterly performance ; but many, we believe, hold a very opposite opinion. All the subjects of his *Satires* being, however, generally taken from temporary occurrences, and full of personal allusions, which are now either not understood or little remembered, render his works less interesting and inviting. Churchill's life was a very dissipated one, and his career brief and eccentric. He was, as Lord Byron calls him, "the comet of a season."

Goldsmith,  
b. 1728.  
d. 1774.

The author of two of the most beautiful poems in our language now claims our attention. Goldsmith, in his *Traveller*, gives us, in the most polished and appropriate diction, the characteristics and predilections of those nations which he had visited, and the suddenness and boldness of the transitions surprise and delight us ; whilst the simplicity and tenderness of *The Deserted Village* excite our admiration and warmest sympathy. In perusing the latter poem, we forget for a time all the comforts and advantages which wealth and commerce can bestow, in our commiseration of the unfortunate exiles, and the desolation of their once happy homes. Lissoy, in Ireland, the place where the poet spent his early youth, is supposed to be the Village intended to be described. Several of its localities are still pointed out ; and the hawthorn, it is said, has paid the penalty of its celebrity in

being nearly cut to pieces by travellers for memorials of the bard. His description of the Country Clergyman is much and generally admired; but it is not, we believe, quite original, or at least it bears a great resemblance to Chaucer's *Poure Parson of a Town*, and to Dryden's *Good Parson*. Although it has not been our practice to make selections from the works of the different poets we have noticed, yet we cannot resist quoting the following lines, on account of the very beautiful simile they contain:—

“ Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
 And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side ;  
 But in his duty prompt at every call,  
 He watch'd, and wept, and prayed, and felt for all ;  
 And as a bird each fond endearment tries  
 To tempt her new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,  
 He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,  
 Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.”

His *Hermit*, or *Edwin and Angelina*, is a sweetly-pleasing tale. It was at one time thought to have been suggested by Dr. Percy's *Friar of Orders Gray*, but it is now admitted to have been written first. It has also been considered as an imitation of a French Ballad, called *Raimond ét Angeline*, published about a century before, and to which it certainly bears a great resemblance,\* though unquestionably much improved, and far more elegant

\* Appendix, Note I.

and poetical. Dr. Goldsmith's admirers, however, still contend for the originality of the poem, and allege that the coincidence naturally arises from the similarity of the tale. His *Retaliation* is distinguished for its good-natured, yet forcible, delineation of the characters there portrayed, particularly that of Mr. Burke; indeed, Goldsmith has thrown his own amiable and kindly feelings over all his works. He was, says Sir James Mackintosh, the most natural of cultivated poets; and Johnson, speaking of his poetry in general, observes, that his language is copious without exuberance, exact without constraint, and easy without weakness. We must admit the justness of these remarks, and, in respect to his poetical performances, feel inclined to subscribe to the truth of that portion of the panegyrick which adorns his cenotaph—

“ — nullum

Quod tetigit, non ornavit.”

Cowper,  
b. 1731.  
d. 1800.

It has been somewhere remarked, that from the death of Goldsmith to the rise of Cowper, is the most barren period of our poetical annals since the Reformation. This may be true, but the period was very short, and most satisfactorily put an end to. There is an originality and a piety, and a pure morality always pervading the works of Cowper, which drew forth the admiration of his contemporaries, and which continue to excite that of their posterity. You are aware, that a portion of his

poems are written in rhyme, and a part in blank verse ; but a very decided preference belongs to the latter. His *Hope*, *Truth*, *Retirement*, &c., are certainly not equal to his *Task*, which is a poem of very considerable merit, and has been highly praised by those best qualified to appreciate its claims. It is very generally read and esteemed, and it has been, we believe truly, said, that as long as a taste for simplicity and energy of style ; for the charms of nature, of virtue, and of religion shall exist, so long will the *Task* of Cowper continue a favorite with the public. Cowper's blank verse is different from that of any other poet, and has several peculiarities of its own. It is less sublime and less powerful than Milton's, and it has not the sententious solemnity of Young's, nor is it so sonorous, or so forcibly descriptive, as Thomson's ; but its nervous and devout simplicity, its freedom from all affectation, its minute and familiar description of scenes from nature and domestic life, and its idiomatic language, drawn from "the well of English undefiled," may be considered, perhaps, as surpassing all our poets. Although Cowper was afflicted with a constitutional melancholy, yet he had a vivid perception of the ridiculous, with a fund of wit and humour. His well-known story of John Gilpin need not be referred to in proof of this, for it is visible, though apparently repressed, in most of his works ; indeed, it is said, that John

Gilpin was written whilst he was suffering under one of his morbid visitations.

Sir W. Jones,  
b. 1746.  
d. 1794.

Sir William Jones' title to the rank of an English poet is generally lost sight of in the varied splendour of his other literary attainments. The greatest part of his poetical productions consist of translations of Hindu tales and fables, or original poems, founded on the histories, or fictions, or customs of the East. These are extremely beautiful, though, perhaps, not very interesting to the general reader. He published an early pastoral, entitled, *Arcadia*, and a noble Ode in imitation of *Alceus*, with a few other occasional pieces. But his time was chiefly occupied by his professional avocations, and his other literary pursuits. All his poetical works, however, clearly shew that, had he devoted himself to the exclusive pursuit of English poetry, he would have been fully entitled to take a high place amongst the most celebrated of her sons. In the language of one of his admirers, we may say,—

“ ————— for him the Muse  
Distilled from every flower Hyblean dews.”

Hayley,  
b. 1745.  
d. 1820.

Hayley enjoyed great popularity at the close of our present period. Whether it was owing to the paucity of poetical productions of original merit which then existed, or whether from the mecha-

nical style of polished versification which he adopted being in accordance with the torpid taste of the age, certain it is, that he was the virtual Laureate of the day. We had some doubts whether he did not properly belong to our next chapter, but upon the whole we thought he would be more fittingly placed in this. His first considerable work was his *Essay on Epic Poetry*, dedicated to Mason, the notes to which were much esteemed; his principal one, *The Triumphs of Temper*, followed, and was greatly extolled. He wrote also, in verse, his *Essay on Painting*, and his *Essay on History*, and some other works which were then deemed to possess high poetical excellence, but are now lightly esteemed when placed in comparison with the vigorous compositions of more modern bards.

Although we have omitted the mention of those who may strictly be termed Scotch poets (for Thomson, Armstrong, and Falconer were domesticated in England when they wrote), yet, as it will be impossible, in our progress, to pass over the names of Burns and Scott, we cannot conclude this, our third period, without some slight reference to the Bards of Scotland.

Scotch  
Poets.

We are not going to discuss the antiquity of Ossian, or the imposture of Macpherson; nor to carry you back to the times of Barbour or Blind Harry, to the much extolled Kings Quair of the

first James, to the days of Dunbar, or Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, or of him,\*

" — Who in a barbarous age  
Gave to rude Scotland Virgil's page."

but to some poets who flourished during the period we are considering. Allan Ramsay, whose *Gentle Shepherd* was much admired, not only by his own countrymen, but by Pope, Gay, and many of his poetical contemporaries in England. His *Farewell to Lochaber* is still a favorite song. Logan also, who possessed imagination, taste, and sensibility, united with purity of sentiment and language. He wrote several odes and poems. His *Braes of Yarrow*—the lament of a damsel for the loss of her lover—is full of pathos and feeling.† *Crawford*, whose *Bush aboon Traquair* and *Tweedside*, are two sweet pastoral songs; and with Sir Gilbert Elliott's *Amynta*, another pastoral, have been much admired. Lastly, Beattie, who wrote the *Hermit*, beginning with that well-known line—

" At the close of the day, when the hamlet was still;"

with translation of the *Pastorals* of Virgil, and other pleasing pieces; but whose principal production was *The Minstrel*, a very delightful though but half finished poem, in the Spenserian stanza, divided into two parts, the first of which is fraught

\* Gawain Douglas.

† Appendix, Note K.

with imagery and beautiful description ; and the second, full of refined and philosophical reflections. The versification is correct and melodious, and the sentiments pure and benevolent. It portrays, as a noble French author \* observes, " the first effects of the Muse on a young Bard, who is still a stranger to the spirit with which he is tormented ;" as when, for instance, hearing some legend or chaunt of the olden time,—

" Wonder and joy ran thrilly through his heart,  
Much he the tale admired, but more the tuneful art."

\* Chateaubriand.



### LECTURE III.

THE bold and novel theories broached by our Gallican neighbours at the commencement of their great Revolution, promising as they did such brilliant and beneficial results to mankind, met with considerable encouragement from a portion of the British community. Those whose enthusiastic minds hailed that astonishing convulsion with joy and with hope, and believed that all its predicted blessings would be realised, earnestly endeavoured to accelerate their fulfilment. Not only did political writers bring to its aid their newspapers, their pamphlets, and such like prose-vehicles of communication, but they, too, whom the genius of poetry inspired, strove to make converts to the cause, by invoking every Muse for its success. It was also one of the extraordinary effects of that extraordinary event, that it united in its early progress men of the most dissimilar characters—"Ethereal natures with the worst of slaves." Whilst the turbulent, the profligate, and the selfish, anticipated from it the most favorable opportunities of gratifying their ambition, their desires, or their avarice ;

there were also those whose ardent and benevolent minds, though shrinking with horror from the crimes and cruelties it occasioned, looked only to the consummation of that moral and political regeneration which was to banish vice and misery, and bigotry and oppression from the world—to that happy period when the strong and the weak were to be linked together in one willing chain of universal philanthropy—"when the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid."

But vain and delusive as were the hopes, and wild and chimerical as were the doctrines thus entertained and promulgated, they had, nevertheless, a considerable influence on our national literature, and, particularly, on that branch of it we are now discussing. The bright visions those hopes created, excited the imagination, and gave birth to an originality of conception, and an intensity of thought and sentiment, with a delineation of the stronger passions, which had not before, or at least not for upwards of a century, been displayed by our poets; whilst the daring contempt for all established customs and opinions, inculcated by those doctrines, tended to produce in men's minds a fondness for innovation, and a longing after novelty, which not only affected our civil and political affairs, but extended even to our literary pursuits. It is true that the two Wartons (for the poet whose works we have noticed, had a brother, Joseph, the author of several pleasing poetical pieces), and

Gray, with a few others, had in some degree broken through the manacles of Pope and his disciples. But now our poetry, both in substance and in form, in the choice of subjects and the mode of versification, appeared to set at defiance all the generally received canons of composition. Every votary of the Muse seemed imbued with the spirit of the Roman bard, and, scorning the authority of a master, ready to exclaim, in the words of George Wither :

“ For I will for no man’s pleasure  
Change a syllable or measure,  
Pedants shall not tie my strains  
To our antique poets’ veins;  
Being born as free as these,  
I will sing as I shall please.”

Our present Poet Laureate,\* Mr. Southey, was amongst the most zealous enthusiasts in the expected renovation of the world, and enlisted in its service with all the warmth of youth and the consciousness of talent. One of the first ebullitions to which his zeal gave rise, was a kind of poetical drama, entitled *Wat Tyler*, written evidently for the purpose of inculcating those notions of liberty and equality which were then so rife. There are in it some pleasing passages, but its tendency was so obvious, as was that also of his *Botany-Bay Eclogues*, though many parts of them are very pathetic,

Southey,  
b. 1774.

\* Written in 1841.

that it incurred the censure of all those who were desirous of supporting the then established orders of society.

Joan of Arc was Mr. Southey's first epic, and embraced a period very interesting, though rather inglorious to Englishmen. As the political principles of the author were then known, it was supposed by many that he was induced to fix upon the event he celebrates, and which ended in the expulsion of the British arms from France, for the purpose of disparaging our national character, or at least of exposing those illiberal prejudices with which it was then considered to be tainted. After, therefore, the wonder at the talent of the youthful writer had subsided, it was received with suspicion and dislike, and never became a popular poem.

The story of Madoc may also be said to be one of national interest, but that interest is much diminished by the remoteness of the period at which it is supposed to have occurred. There are some parts of it very beautiful; but we cannot carry our panegyrick so far as Sir Walter Scott did, when he said, that the day would come when Madoc would assume his real place at the foot of Milton.

In the choice of the subjects of his two eastern epics, we think Mr. Southey has been unfortunate; at least, so far as regards their popularity. The superstitions, the customs, and the manners of the inhabitants of the countries in which those scenes are laid, excite few emotions in the minds of the

general reader at all correspondent with those which animated that of the highly-gifted author. His *Thalaba* and *Curse of Kehama* have not therefore, coupled with their unusual and eccentric versification, met with that general attention and admiration which they undoubtedly deserve ; teeming as they do in many parts with poetic beauty, and all the wild and splendid creations of a luxuriant imagination.

*Roderick the Last of the Goths* is, and we fear, Feb. 1841. if the melancholy reports of his mental aberrations are true, will be the last of Mr. Southey's productions. It is written in blank verse, in regular decasyllabic numbers, and has been more applauded than any of his former ones. The Peninsular War had, at the time of its publication, created an extraordinary degree of interest in whatever related to Spain, or her history, and led our poets to seek for themes in that "renowned romantic land : " independently, however, of any adventitious circumstances, this must, we think, be deemed intrinsically the best of Mr. Southey's epics. Amidst the richest and most beautiful imagery and powerful description there is in it, as indeed may be found in all our author's works, even in those written under the deleterious effects of his first political impressions, a pure and devotional tone of religious feeling.

In some of his minor productions, Mr. Southey has, like Lord Surrey, endeavoured, though ineffectually, to introduce into English poetry the metres

of Latin verse, and that, too, even after his hatred of innovation has been as extreme as his former love of change ; some of his Laureate effusions are so written.

Coleridge,  
b. 1772.  
d. 1834.

Coleridge shared with his friend Southey in an ardent admiration of the new philosophy, and it gave birth to several of his minor pieces. Amongst these was a kind of incantation, entitled, *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, and evidently levelled against the then prime minister. Having been first published anonymously, it caused, from its talent and virulence, great curiosity about its author. Coleridge, unfortunately, did not possess sufficient industry to undertake any great work, and his poetic fame now rests chiefly upon his strange imaginative tale of *The Ancient Mariner*, and “that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem,” as Lord Byron denominates it, his *Christabel*.

Darwin,  
b. 1731.  
d. 1802.

Dr. Darwin, though an early worshipper of the Muses, did not publish his celebrated work, *The Botanic Garden*, until after the commencement of our present period ; and he then did so, in two parts, under the titles of *The Economy of Vegetation*, and *The Loves of the Plants*. He was unquestionably a man of genius, and possessed considerable fancy, but his language is often offensive to purity of style and good taste. Though polished and melodious, it is too glittering and ornamental,

and, with few exceptions, there is in it little of pathos or feeling; whilst some of the sentiments and opinions are objectionable on account of their immoral tendency, and are also somewhat imbued with the democratical notions of the day.

Yet these publications were for a time very popular; and we find even Cowper, whose taste and style were of so very opposite a kind, applauding the author of them in some very pleasing lines. The *Economy of Vegetation* was written long before it was published, so early indeed as 1780, and Dr. Darwin thus prognosticates in it the progress of Steam. He did not live to see, as we have seen, the fulfilment of the prophecy contained in the first couplet. Will that in the second ever be realized?

“ Soon shall thy arm, unconquer'd Steam, afar  
 Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car,  
 Or on wide-waving wings expanded bear  
 The flying chariot through the fields of air.”

But this popularity was only of temporary duration. A periodical journal, called *The Anti-Jacobin*, first published in 1797, was conducted by men of great talent, and desirous of stopping the progress of those new-fangled doctrines which were deemed so detrimental to society. One of the principal contributors to this paper was the celebrated George Canning, who, in his *Loves of the Triangles*, being a parody on some parts of the *Botanic Garden*,

Canning,  
 b. 1770.  
 d. 1827.

and certainly one of the best ever written, doomed Dr. Darwin to irrecoverable ridicule. In the same journal, Mr. Payne Knight's *Progress of Society*, a dull, turgid poem, and deeply tinged with the new notions, met with a similar fate. Mr. Canning, though then a young man, had been already much distinguished for his literary attainments, and, as his *New Morality*, and some of his other publications in verse evidently indicate, was endowed with considerable poetical powers; but the cares and contentions of an active public life prevented their due cultivation.

Gifford,  
b. 1756.  
d. 1826.

A class of writers of lesser note than Darwin and Knight, but with equally bad taste and objectionable principles, had also sprung up, and were called in contempt, *The Della Cruscan School*. These had met with an early castigation from the pen of Mr. Gifford, one of the ablest and severest of our modern satirists, who, by his *Bæviad* and *Mæviad*, published in 1794-5, consigned the whole crew to the waters of oblivion. Mr. Gifford afterwards translated Juvenal, with, it is said, great spirit and effect. That he himself was possessed of considerable poetical talent, is, we think, shewn by his lines "To an Early Violet," and those beginning with "I wish I was where Anna lies," inserted in his notes to the *Mæviad*. He was for many years editor of the present *Quarterly Review*.

---

The authors of the Pleasures of Memory, and the Pleasures of Hope, now claim our attention. There have been some differences of opinion on the comparative merits of these two poems, but, without entering into the minutiae of criticism, we ourselves cannot but give the preference to the latter.

Rogers,  
b. 1762,  
and  
Campbell,  
b. 1777.

Mr. Rogers published his poem in 1792, and it is undoubtedly one of a very superior order, full of refined thought and tender feeling, with two or three interesting and pathetic episodes; but the sentiments of the other are of a much sublimer cast; the imagery on a more lofty and comprehensive scale; and its language more vigorous and energetic. The versification of both is polished and harmonious; and from the first they were, and have always continued to be, very popular poems. Although rejecting the novelties of style which characterized the writings of many of their contemporaries, yet we still think that we can discern in each of them, or certainly in Mr. Campbell's, the influence of some of those indefinite notions of the perfectibility, or constant progression of the human mind to perfection, which were then so prevalent.

"Come, bright Improvement, on the car of Time,  
And rule the spacious world from clime to clime."

"Where barbarous hordes on Scythian mountains roam,  
Truth, Mercy, Freedom, yet shall find a home."

"Tyrants! in vain ye trace the wizard ring;  
In vain ye limit minds' unwearied spring;" &c. &c.

Mr. Rogers' *Voyage of Columbus* contains some fine passages, particularly those portions of it where land is first discovered. The previous excitement and discontent of the crew are pourtrayed very naturally, and with considerable animation; but, arrogant as it may be to set our opinion in opposition to Sir Walter Scott's, we still think the description is not equal to that of Mr. Southey, in his *Madoc*. Italy upon the whole is rather tedious, but no doubt the author has pourtrayed Italian manners and scenery with correctness, and in some instances rendered them interesting. His *Human Life* is a didactic poem, characteristic of the elegance and refinement of the author's mind, and abounding with correct moral reflections.

Campbell, in his *Gertrude of Wyoming*, has successfully adopted the Spenserian stanza, and has bestowed upon it his usual polish; and, although not displaying perhaps the ability of the *Pleasures of Hope*, the poem is replete with simplicity, delicacy, and tenderness. *Theodoric* is generally considered as a failure, and as not having improved, but somewhat injured, the poetical reputation of its author; still it must be allowed to be an elegant and pathetic tale. Many of his smaller pieces are very beautiful; and in *Lyric Poetry*, Mr. Campbell has far exceeded his contemporaries, as his *Hohenlinden*, *Battle of the Baltic*, and *Mariners of England*, abundantly prove.

The greater part of the works of Mr. Crabbe have been published within our present period, though he began to write somewhat earlier; so early indeed as 1781, when his *Library*, and soon afterwards his *Village*, appeared. He was then silent until the year 1807, when he published his *Parish Register*, and a few years afterwards his *Borough*. His last work was his *Tales of the Hall*.

Crabbe,  
b. 1754.  
d. 1832.

The poetical merits of these works have been much discussed. It is said that they present too gloomy a picture of human nature, and that his subjects are generally such as are not well adapted to poetical composition, because they are chiefly occupied in displaying the vices, miseries, and misfortunes of mankind in the common daily occurrences of life, and among the lower classes of society. But surely, to well-regulated minds, the attainment of the knowledge of human nature, in all its varieties, must be desirable; and there are many, particularly in the higher classes, and amongst the female sex, who, from their exalted stations, have few opportunities of obtaining that knowledge, in all its gradations, but through the medium of literary performances; and, novel as was the attempt, Mr. Crabbe has, we think, satisfactorily shewn that the affections, the feelings, and the passions of those lower classes, may, when pourtrayed with fidelity and truth, be made quite susceptible of poetical embellishment.

Mr. Crabbe's style is terse, condensed, and

forcible; but is sometimes flat, and often too familiar and homely. (A late wit once designated him "Pope in worsted stockings.") Yet, when he indulges in the description of rural scenery, his pictures are correct and enchanting. There may be in his writings a tendency to estimate the human character at too low a rate, and to bare its imperfections with too unsparing a hand—to concede too little to its spontaneous good feelings, and its acquired sympathies—to be, as we think Lord Byron somewhere calls him, "Nature's sternest painter." There is, however, no want of compassion for its errors, or forgiveness of its follies; and though he exhibits the vices that degrade, yet he often shews the virtues that dwell in a humble heart. The stories by which these are illustrated are oftentimes painfully pathetic, but the moral lessons they inculcate are always sound and sagacious. It is a high tribute to their merit, that from these tales the elegant and enlightened mind of Mr. Fox derived some of its latest gratifications; and that they tended to soothe, during his prolonged illness, the severe sufferings of Sir Walter Scott.

Burns,  
b. 1759.  
d. 1796.

We are aware that, in noticing the poets of our present period, we are not proceeding exactly in chronological order, or Crabbe and Burns would have been in an earlier position. It is not compatible with our plan to give any minute account

of the very interesting life of the latter bard; or of the progress of his untaught genius, when, on his father's retired farm in Argyleshire,

"He walked, in glory and in joy,  
Behind his plough, upon the mountain top ;"

and when, without the aid of learning, and with a scanty supply of books, he caught from the ballads and songs of his native land—"the tales of other days"—that inspiration which afterwards made him her delight and her pride. We do not regret, as it has sometimes been regretted, that he did not attempt some great continuous poetical work. His genius was, perhaps, inconsistent with such a task; for, as Dr. Currie observes, his Muse was in a high degree capricious—she came uncalled, and afterwards frequently refused to attend his bidding. Burns, too, was not the poet of invention, or imagination, but of feeling and passion, combined with a devoted love of the works of nature. We enter warmly into his feelings when we hear him describe, with such fervent enthusiasm, the rural characters, or rural scenery, of his own country; and we deeply sympathise with, or rather pity, those bursts of passion arising from the remorse and mental disquietude at those actions which a fiery and undisciplined temperament had occasioned, and which were at variance with the feelings and opinions of his calmer moments.

As might be expected from his ardent and daring

disposition, Burns became a zealous partizan of the French Revolution; and although he was too much a poet of Nature's growth for us to suppose that his poetical productions were greatly influenced by that event, yet, if they do not expressly praise, some few of them are evidently much tinged with the sentiments and opinions to which it gave rise. Of his serious pieces, his *Cotter's Saturday Night*; and of his comic ones, his *Tam O'Shanter*; are esteemed the best. The beautiful picture of virtue and happiness in humble life, so feelingly portrayed in the former, must affect every feeling heart, and the strain of devotion in the few last lines of it every pious one. The ludicrous scenes and allusions of the other an Englishman can scarcely appreciate. Some of his shorter poems are of a melancholy turn, as, for instance, "*Man was made to mourn*," and "*Henceforth I hail thee, thou gloomy December*." Some of his Love Songs are sweet and pathetic; and, springing from actual incidents in the life of the poet, are very interesting.

Kirke White,  
b. 1785.  
d. 1806. After discussing the merits of a self-taught bard like Burns, we cannot help associating with them the name of one, the early blighting of whose genius in the very spring-tide of its brightest promise, is deeply to be lamented. The productions of Henry Kirke White have been collected with sacred zeal by Mr. Southey, and they afford evidence of a mind fraught with poetic feeling.

His health, however, sank under the unwearied and incessant industry which he employed in his pursuits, and to which he at length fell a victim,

“When Science self-destroyed her favorite son.”

Clifton Grove was one of his earliest pieces; but there is nothing peculiar to admire in it, unconnected with the youth and circumstances of its author. Some of his smaller ones are very affecting: that entitled *Time* we think the best; but the *Christiad* was Henry's own favorite. Mr. Southey thinks that his riper judgment would have altered his opinion, scriptural subjects being, he says, unfavorable to narrative poetry. Yet Spenser, not on account of his hymns only, but from his great work, has been called a *sacred* poet. Now, whether the *Faery Queen* be justly deemed a scriptural narrative poem or not, surely the *Paradise Lost* must be considered as such, as must also *Paradise Regained*. We are aware that the German critic whom we have often quoted observes, that *Paradise Lost* partakes of those difficulties that attend all Christian poems which attempt to make the mysteries of our religion the subject of their fictions; and that Christianity, in and by itself, is no proper subject for poetry. Dr. Johnson, too, in his *Life of Waller*, maintains, in a very elaborate argument, that devotional poetry cannot often please, for that the intercourse between God and the human soul cannot be poetical; whilst on the

other hand, Bishop Lowth, in his *Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, asserts that the actual origin of poetry—its primary object and destination—must be referred to religion, and that her first occupation was in the temple and at the altar.

Now we are inclined to believe that the language of poetry springs from the fervor of devotion. We find that the religious rites and ceremonies of the most uncultivated nations are accompanied by hymns and songs to the idols of their imagination. We know that this was the case with the ancient Britons in common with other Celtic nations, and also with the Gothic race; and modern travellers have also concurred in similar accounts of the savage tribes of America and New Zealand. We can easily understand how their strong natural feelings and violent emotions should vent themselves in that bold metaphorical language, and impassioned tone, to which barbarous nations are so much addicted, but which in more civilized and polished states assume all the graces and figures of refined poetry.

It may be true, as a celebrated poet and poetical critic of the present day observes, that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, and that no lovers of the art have gone more astray, than the pious and devout; but the misuse of devotional poetry ought surely not to be employed against the due cultivation of it, if it can be shewn to be susceptible of a proper and beneficial application;

and its benefits, both in a moral and religious view, are, we think, unquestionable. Everybody must admit that the impressions made upon the mind are in general much stronger and more permanent when they are created by verse than by prose; as, for instance, the hymns, and songs, and nursery rhymes on sacred subjects taught to children, are much longer recollected than their prose-learnt lessons. The same principle applies in after-life, amid the thoughtlessness of youth, and the cares of manhood; for often, as the pious George Herbert says,

“ A verse may find him who a sermon flies,  
And turn delight into a sacrifice.”

But who shall be called strictly Sacred English Poets it may be difficult to determine. Besides Spenser and Milton, there were the two Fletchers and Drayton, and Cowley, and Herbert, Quarles, and several others, who, since the Reformation, have done honor to sacred song. Young and Cowper also may be fairly entitled to the appellation, as may also Roberts and Cumberland, the *Judah Restored* of the one, and the *Calvary* of the other, being poems of no common order; and Heber, Montgomery, and Keble, of late years, may be especially named.

Nor is that objection sustainable which we hear so often made, and one which was much insisted upon in the days of the Puritans, against sacred

poets having recourse to illustrations or embellishments borrowed from the tales and fables of heathen mythology, as displayed in the classical productions of Greece and Rome. Now, without calling to our aid the eminent examples of Spenser and Milton, we may, in vindication of the practice, observe that those illustrations and embellishments may be often most successfully employed in exhibiting the contrast between the absurd fictions of pagan idolatry, and the rational notions of the Deity and the purity of devotion inculcated by the Christian religion.

Whilst, however, the practice so objected to may, we think, be fairly vindicated, we would nevertheless not keep out of view the advice of an ancient Father of the Church,\* who, when recommending the cultivation of classical learning as subservient to religious knowledge, advises that we should be very careful in our selections, and that we should follow the example of bees, who do not dwell upon every flower; but that in gathering from the roses we should avoid the thorns. With this caution, however, we would most zealously deprecate any attempt to separate classical from devotional poetry, and earnestly exclaim,

“ Oh ! never may Castalia's streams divide,  
From Siloa's brook and Jordan's hallow'd tide.”

\* St. Hilary.

For the few first years of the present century, there was a great lack of poetical productions. Hayley's reign was no longer acknowledged ; Darwin had been ridiculed into oblivion ; Crabbe and Rogers were silent ; Campbell had only just returned from the Continent, and contented himself with *Lochiel's Warning* ; and Coleridge, though he had written, had not yet published his *Ancient Mariner*, or *Christabel*. Southey's *Thalaba* was the only considerable exception. But this want was not to be of long continuance. The Great Magician of the North, as he has been often called, had been for some time forging those spells, which were to enchant and captivate his countrymen. Soon after the event to which we have referred, on commencing the review of our fourth period, there had sprung up amongst a portion of the English and Scotch *literati* a fondness for German poetry ; and Scott, whose early studies and favorite pursuits had led him to delight in the romantic and the marvellous, was much struck with the wild imagery and supernatural horrors by which it was distinguished. So early as 1796, he translated and published the two poems of *Leonore*, and the *Wild Huntsman*, from *Bürger* ; and in 1799, the *Goetz of Birlichingen*, from *Goëthe*. The cultivation of German literature continuing to foster his early tastes, he very soon afterwards wrote his two original ballads of *Glenfinlas*, and the *Eve of St. John*, which, having been privately circulated amongst

Scott,  
b. 1771.  
d. 1832

his friends, and much admired, were afterwards inserted in a work, entitled *Tales of Wonder*, published by (as he was generally called, from a novel he had written) Monk Lewis, a bard of some notoriety, and not devoid of imagination, but full of ghost stories (as his *Alonso the Brave*, and the *Fair Imogene*), and *Diablerie* of all sorts, which, however, made him the more welcome to our author.

Schlegel observes upon the fondness of the English for ballads; and the national taste had been much gratified by the publication of Dr. Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. This work, which it is believed had, from its appearance in 1765, considerable influence in turning the attention of the public to the beauties discoverable in our early poetry, was a favorite of Scott in his younger days, and is supposed to have, in a great degree, directed his taste to that kind of poetic composition to which he was so much attached. The Borders of Scotland had been long celebrated for traditionary songs and legendary tales; and Scott, having spent much time in collecting a number of them, published in 1802 his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which was very favorably received.

Strengthened now by private and public approbation, and fully acquainted with Border history, Scott, in about three years afterwards, sent forth to the world his celebrated *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which at once established his reputation

as one of the first poets of the day, and he soon became the most popular. *The Lay* was in 1808 followed by *Marmion*, a longer and more connected poem, and one which immediately became a general favorite. Much criticism was exercised at the time upon the comparative merits of the two poems, and public opinion was divided in awarding the palm; but all acknowledged and applauded the originality and vivacity of narrative—the romantic lore and antiquarian research—the full and graphic delineations of natural scenery, with the spirited tone of chivalrous feelings, which pervaded them both.

In 1810, *The Lady of the Lake* appeared, and the high expectations which had been raised by *The Lay*, and *Marmion*, were not disappointed. It was, indeed, more unanimously admired than either, as more skilfully constructed, and fuller of incident and variety of character. *Rokeby*, and *The Lord of the Isles*, followed at no distant periods, but, whether the public taste had been satiated with the sameness of style, or the similarity of subjects, or with both; or whether these two poems are, as perhaps is the case, intrinsically inferior to the former ones; or whether another luminary, then shining brightly in the poetical hemisphere, had dimmed their lustre; certain it is that they were not received with equal applause.

In the short intervals between the successive appearances of these two poems, Scott published

several minor ones :—The Vision of Don Roderick, The Bridal of Triermain, Harold the Dauntless, and some others. The Vision, written to assist the Spanish patriots, is in the stately Spenserian stanza, which Scott had previously adopted in the introductory and concluding parts of *The Lady of the Lake*, and in the execution of which he appears to have been successful. The Bridal is of a lighter nature, and in his favorite style of versification. It was published at first anonymously, and professed to be an imitation of Scott, and people were for a long time deceived and in doubt about its author.

It has recently become the fashion to depreciate Scott's poetical reputation, and to attempt to lessen the estimation in which, as poet, he was held by his immediate contemporaries. There is, it must be admitted, a carelessness and an irregularity in his versification, and a frequent recurrence of the same images, and sometimes of the same expressions; there is also a great resemblance in the subjects of his principal poems, and in the nature of his style, and he has none of those startling theories, and splendid paradoxes, which are often so attractive and popular; but then there is such richness of fancy and coloring,—such vivacity, energy, and fulness of description,—such vivid and glowing imagery, mixed with such life-breathing characters, and often, when we least expect them, with such profound observations on human nature, that we must strongly condemn the sacrilegious hands that would strive to remove

him from that niche in the Temple of the Muses, to which he has been, in our opinion, most justly exalted.

You are aware that Scott published several tales and romances, generally known by the name of "The Waverley Novels." We allude to them here merely for the purpose of calling your attention to those beautiful detached pieces of original poetry with which they abound. The productions themselves are unrivalled in the history of literature, and have become the admiration not only of this kingdom, but of every country in which the human intellect is cultivated. Of them indeed we may truly, and we hope without impropriety, say, "their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words to the ends of the world."

Soon after the publication of *The Lady of the Lake*, a more powerful poet arose,—in style and language "a bard of loftier port"—Byron! whose earlier invocations of the Muse had been treated with so much ridicule by the great critical tribunal, which at that time exercised so despotic a jurisdiction over the realms of literature. To its attack upon the *Hours of Idleness*, however, we are probably indebted for arousing that spirit, which produced the vigorous and indignant retaliation of English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, and in a few years afterwards splendidly shone forth in the two first cantos of *Childe Harold*. Though the Pilgri-

Byron,  
b. 1788.  
d. 1824.

mage contains some sentiments which are certainly censurable, and which were severely censured at the time, yet the undoubted genius and talent which the work displayed, could not but meet with general admiration. His account of Spain and her inhabitants, and his reference to the events which were there taking place, were, at that time, peculiarly interesting to all readers ; whilst scholars were gratified, and their classical associations awakened, by his vivid allusions to the history of Greece, and his animated description of her delightful scenery,

“ Where each old poetic mountain  
Inspiration breathes around.”

Three beautiful tales, whose scenes are all laid “amid the circling Cyclades,” flowed rapidly from the pen of the noble bard, and soon placed him on that poetic throne which the sagacity of Scott saw that he himself could no longer retain. The *Corsair*, the last of the three, was soon followed by the tale of *Lara*, the *Siege of Corinth*, with *Parisina*, and some minor pieces ; whilst a certain mysteriousness which the poet had contrived to throw around the characters of his tales, and that too in such a manner as if each hero were an impersonification of himself, led the young and the imaginative to regard him with a sort of mixed feeling of admiration and awe. Circumstances of a domestic nature led Lord Byron to leave England in 1818,

and soon afterwards the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* appeared. Exquisitely beautiful as they are, we confess that, probably from first impressions, we give the preference to the two first. *The Prisoner of Chillon*, *The Dream*, and *The Hebrew Melodies* succeeded; but, after the publication of these, his evil genius began to possess him; and either from his own irritated and unrestrained feelings, or from the influence, probably imperceptible to himself, of the associates whom he had gathered, or who gathered themselves around him, he was led to pollute his splendid talents and fine taste, by engaging in those literary compositions, to which the name of "the Satanic School of Poetry," was, perhaps, too harshly applied. However, they were unquestionably of the most baneful tendency, and met with great and general reprobation; and deeply is this tendency to be regretted, as amongst them, and particularly in *Don Juan*, there are some of the most sublime and enchanting scenes and descriptions.

What may, perhaps, be without impropriety called the *moral* tone of Lord Byron's poetry, differs widely from that of Sir Walter Scott. Whilst the one appears to rejoice in portraying the virtues and affections that adorn humanity; in inculcating the practice of all the endearing charities of life, and in softening its asperities and natural evils; the other seems to have no sympathy with his fellow-creatures—with their feelings or their frailties—but

treats all the virtuous and amiable emotions of the human heart with scorn and derision, whilst he dwells upon those which are most reprehensible—hatred, revenge, and a fierce and vindictive misanthropy. These feelings and passions, pourtrayed in language of the most powerful energy, are however occasionally intermixed with deep pathos, exquisite tenderness, and lofty sentiment, which palliate, though they cannot excuse, the perverse employment of such great natural talents. His style is correct and spirited, his thoughts and images original, his versification harmonious, and he applies very skilfully, though perhaps used too frequently, what we think we have somewhere seen alliteration called, “the great secret of melody.”

Perhaps one of the principal faults of Lord Byron's poems is, that in all his heroes there is one invariable sameness of character. As Lord Dudley, in his Letters to Dr. Copleston, observes of Lara, that he is just the same gloomy, haughty, mysterious villain as Childe Harold, the Giaour, the Corsair, and all the rest ; adding, “one should think it was easier to invent a new character, than to describe the old one over and over again.”

The misanthropy which seems to pervade all Lord Byron's poetry has been sometimes attributed to his innate natural disposition ; but judging from his early sentiments and feelings, as shewn in his first production, his *Hours of Idleness*, we should scarcely think so ; perhaps, having first assumed it

for poetical purposes, and having led his readers, inferentially at least, to suppose that he identified the characters of his creation with that of his own, it might, even unconsciously to himself, have become, as it were, his second nature. That he was influenced very much throughout his life by his poetical temperament, is, we think, visible in many circumstances of it, and particularly in that daring adventure to which he owed his death. We can scarcely ascribe his sympathy with the Greeks to any feelings of philanthropy, and he certainly was not at heart any great admirer of popular rights. It must, we think, have proceeded from his early classical associations, and a fondness for that land, which, by first calling forth the greatest efforts of his Muse, had contributed to place him on the pinnacle of Fame. Perhaps also, in the warmth of his imagination, he might have looked forward to those future ages, when, restored to her independence, and conscious of her former greatness, her regenerated sons might celebrate him as their earliest champion,—as the tutelary genius of their liberated country.

“ And should all-changeful Time, in his sure course  
 To Learning and to Liberty, restore  
 Their once-loved sacred seats, and once again  
 Behold the Guardian Genius of the soil  
 Rising refresh'd, as from a long deep trance,  
 And with the giant-power of Freedom loosening  
 From foreign fetters her regenerate sons;  
 Then, haply, shall some patriot-bard be found,

In grateful and in glowing numbers, telling  
 Of him who first aroused the dormant flame,  
 And taught their slumbering sires once more to join  
 Glory and Honour with the name of Greece;  
 Then shall her banded hosts, 'mid war's alarms,  
 Invoke his hovering spirit to the fight,  
 Or to his memory round the festal board,  
 Pledge high the genial cup of "Samian wine;"  
 And his own "Zia's Maids" shall wreathes entwine  
 To deck his beauteous bust; and tell in songs,  
 Of mournful, but exulting melody,  
 How in that Land he sought to renovate,  
 Where Freemen once had lived, and Homer sung,  
 A British Poet, 'mid despair and death,  
 Struck his last strain to Greece and Liberty."

*Anonymous.*

Moore,  
 b. 1788.

And here we must not forget the friend and biographer of the noble Lord. Not only the tuneful Nine, but every lady in the land would cry out against the omission of the bard of Erin. Mr. Moore's first poetical compositions were no doubt offensive both to good taste and morality, but his subsequent ones are free from indelicacy or licentiousness. In his most voluminous work, his *Lalla Rookh*, he has, like Mr. Southey, laid his scenes in remote countries—"in the land of the east, in the clime of the sun"—the manners, customs, and characters of whose inhabitants he has, we believe, painted with great truth, and correctness of colouring; but Persia and Bucharria are so little known to English readers, and the adventures he relates, so little resemble those we have been accustomed

to meet with, that they fail to excite in us much interest or sympathy. His descriptions are very magnificent, and it is said his imagery is quite appropriate; but both are, perhaps, too lavishly ornamental, and too uniformly brilliant, even for eastern subjects;

“Shining on, shining on,” “in their sameness of splendour.”

Lalla Rookh consists of four tales, interspersed with a romantic story of the courtship of the King of Bucharia with a young princess of Persia, whose, to us unfeminine, name gives the title to the work.

The first tale, his Veiled Prophet of Khorassan, is very powerfully written, but is in many parts repulsive, and we feel a sort of disgust as we proceed in some of its very painful scenes. The Fire Worshipper is, we believe, admitted to be the best; the Dirge of the Peri, at the conclusion, is very light and elegant, and many parts of the tale are written with great spirit and energy. Paradise and the Peri is simple and pleasing, and there are some gay and airy songs in the Feast of Roses. The description of the “Young Nourmahal,” “the Light of the Harem,” is in Mr. Moore’s peculiar and happy manner.

The Loves of the Angels is a work, that from its strange title, and coming from the glowing pen of its author, we might have feared would have contained some improprieties of thought or language, yet, though partaking of that gaiety and those

dazzling topics in which he delights to indulge, it is quite free from any such.

But we think Mr. Moore's poetic fame will rest principally and permanently on his Irish Melodies; and well deserving they are of a lasting reputation, as a series of lyrical poetry, where fancy and harmony are conjoined with all those heartfelt associations, which are there expressed in the most animated and appropriate language.

In the course of his career, Mr. Moore has published several satirical pieces, abounding with wit and humour, but, generally, bearing a party and political character, and therefore not of any lasting interest.

There is, no doubt, both in the Melodies and in all Mr. Moore's national and patriotic effusions, a great deal of exaggeration about the woes and sufferings of his native country, and the injustice of her rulers; and we think we can perceive in many of the expressions and sentiments they contain, the influence of that event with an allusion to which we commenced our present chapter, as, for instance, in that one beginning, "O! gone and for ever is the light we saw breaking." They are, however, of the most nationally-exciting nature, and have obviously had a powerful effect upon the ardent temperament of his fellow-countrymen; and although we ourselves, in our unpoetical moments, believe that the chains, and fetters, and bondage, and oppression of which they complain, exist only,

or for the greater part, in his own poetical imagination; yet we, too, have occasionally caught something of the patriotic inspirations of the bard, and, carried away by his enthusiasm, have been now and then tempted to join with him in full chorus,

“ And sing the bold anthem of *Erin-go-bragh*.”

We should here also notice another poet, also a friend and associate of Lord Byron, and one who possessed even greater natural talent than himself, but who perverted it with more than equal pertinacity. His doctrines, however, are more palpably extravagant than those of the noble bard, and his infidelity more undisguised; but being clothed in a more metaphysical dress, and wrapped in greater obscurity of language, they are much more unintelligible, and have consequently been productive of less mischievous effects.

Shelley,  
b. 1792.  
d. 1822.

That Shelley was endowed with great poetical powers can scarcely be disputed, and that some of his imagery is very original and beautiful, will hardly be denied. His poetry has been called “unearthly.” Would that it were more heavenly! The philanthropy he professed (we do not mean insincerely, because his practical benevolence has, we believe, never been questioned,) seems very indistinct and indefinite, and to be founded upon those notions of the attainable perfectibility of the human species, and that anticipated renovation of the world, which bewildered for a time many a cul-

tivated and benevolent mind; but which, whilst mankind exist with their present feelings and passions, can never be realized.

Shelley's great natural powers were developed at an early age, for he was only 18 years old when he wrote his *Queen Mab*, and only a few years older when his *Alastor* followed; in both of which he indulges in those attacks upon society and social institutions—upon laws, human and divine—which in a subsequent work, *The Revolt of Islam*, he says is “to war upon mankind.” Though his principles and sentiments must be abhorrent to every right-minded person, yet must his poetry be admitted to exhibit great boldness of conception, with airy and picturesque imagery, and harmonious, though sometimes painfully eccentric, versification.

Other  
Poets.

It would be quite impossible, on the confined plan we have prescribed to ourselves, to notice individually the number of our modern poets and their works. We must therefore, as we have reluctantly been obliged to do in our progress, omit many deserving of separate consideration\*—The

\* We would here also have referred to those Female Poets who have of late graced our literature, and whose works we presume must have convinced the most incredulous of the poetic powers of the female mind. The names of Baillie, Hemans, and Landon, with many others, will immediately occur to the reader; nor will her's\* be forgotten, who has not unaptly been called “The Byron” of the tuneful sisterhood, and from whose delightful pen many a brilliant and pathetic line may yet be expected.

\* The Hon. Mrs. Norton.

Rev. W. L. Bowles, Professor Wilson, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Montgomery, Pollok, Proctor or Barry Cornwall, Croly, and many others, whose poetical works have graced our literature, and are scattered with profusion through the land,

“Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks  
Of Vallombrosa.”

But there is one amongst them whom we cannot pass over without more particular notice—one who is now the idol of the day, and at whose shrine all those who profess any attachment to the Muses are expected to fall down and worship. Perhaps in the whole history of poetry, there has never been such a change of public opinion as that which has happened in respect to the poetical merits of Mr. Wordsworth<sup>b. 1770.</sup> Prior to the publication of his *Excursion* in 1814, his ballads and lyrical effusions had been treated generally with the most contemptuous neglect or derision; and even that poem itself, when it first appeared, met with the severest chastisement. The great critical tribunal to which we have occasionally referred, represented it as “a tissue of moral and devotional raving,” “imitations of Milton and Cowper grafted on the natural drawl of the Lakers,” and the author’s “perversion of taste” was pronounced to be “altogether incurable, and beyond the power of criticism.” In reviewing *The Tour*, also in 1822, the same journal continues in like strain its critical denunciations. We

believe that the Review only echoed the opinions which were then generally entertained. There were, however, undoubtedly, at the time some of great name who boldly professed themselves the admirers of the bard, and who even then patiently anticipated that future fame which he has attained, although it has probably gone beyond his own or their expectations. It is therefore somewhat difficult to deal with Mr. Wordsworth's poetical character at the present period; for we have to steer between the extremes of former undeserved censure and present exaggerated praise—between that fashionable admiration which knows no bounds of commendation, and those early opinions, which, though they might have been shaken, still cling to the unconvinced minds of those who entertained them, and which they feel reluctant to change until wholly satisfied of their erroneousness.

Mr. Wordsworth joined with his early friends, "Southey and Coleridge, Lloyd and Lamb and Co.," in admiration of that "sublime senselessness of joy," as he in after-days calls it, which was shewn by our neighbours as their nation

"Stream'd with the pomp of a too credulous day,  
When Faith was pledg'd to new-born Liberty."

In the height of their enthusiasm, our author and some of his friends formed the resolution of emigrating to America; and there, on the unpeopled banks of the Susquehanah, to establish a society—

a pantisocracy—where they might enjoy all those fancied blessings which the supposed pernicious institutions of mankind precluded them from enjoying in their native country. Like his friends too, he went far out of the beaten pathway of poetical composition, adopting, however, a peculiar system of his own—a style of almost puerile simplicity, and colloquial plainness, coupled with an attempt to throw around it an ill-assorting air of elevated tenderness and lofty sentiment. This caused his earlier productions to be treated with neglect or ridicule. But the *Excursion* is a poem which ought not to have received the hasty and inconsiderate censures with which it was assailed. Whether it merits the extravagant eulogiums, which are now being constantly poured upon it, is another question.

We should not, even if we were able, attempt to enter upon any lengthened critique of this much celebrated performance. After what we have said of Mr. Crabbe's works, we cannot object to a poet's taking his readers from the exalted scenes of the world, and introducing them to the pleasures or the cares of rural life; but we must say that we cannot meet with any story in them equal in pathos and feeling to many in the tales of the other; nor can we discern in its pages all that deep mental sensibility, and that philanthropical sympathy, by which it is said to be distinguished above all other poetical productions.

It is said, however, that Mr. Wordsworth's poetry is beyond the comprehension of common intellects, and that its beauties are veiled by a certain mysterious philosophy, not to be penetrated by common eyes; but Shakespeare and Milton are comprehended and enjoyed by all classes and degrees of persons who have any relish for poetry, and *their* philosophy is understood, and comes home to the minds and bosoms of all men. Pope, too, with whom it is now much the fashion to contrast Wordsworth, is always perspicuous, and always intelligible, and does not wrap up his meanings in mystical or metaphysical expressions, or in those abstract allusions which

“ ———— vague and undefin'd,  
Play faintly round the ear, but mock the mind.”

These, however, are high themes upon which we will not presume to enter; but we will not withhold the expression of our admiration from some of his Sonnets and many of his detached pieces. Out of the latter we would particularly select those beautiful lines, composed by him near Tintern Abbey on his revisiting the banks of the lovely river on which it is situated, and which he thus graphically apostrophises—

“ O sylvan Wye!—thou wanderer through the woods—  
How often has my spirit turned to thee!”

We have now nearly finished. According to our

professed intention at the outset, we have taken only a concise, and comparatively only a very cursory view of a subject, whose various ramifications might be made to branch out to an almost indefinite extent. Our object has been to give you a general outline of the poetry of your native country, which at some future period of your lives you may fill up as your taste or fancy may suggest. We have therefore been obliged to omit the names of many who might, and who perhaps ought, to be ranked amongst those who have done honor to this department of English literature. Throughout our attempt we have generally given or adopted the opinions of others—those opinions which, in our judgment, appeared to be most correct and impartial; in doing which, or when venturing an opinion of our own, we have endeavoured to free ourselves from that illiberal bias which has recently become so fashionable in the poetical world—which has divided it into sects and parties, and which has been carried far beyond the bounds of fairness and justice, in the exaltation of one class of authors, and in the depression of those of an opposite or different school.

But it has been happily and beautifully said, “in poetry there are many mansions;” and we therefore detest and abjure this setting up of exclusive standards of excellence—this creation of creeds, from whose articles any deviation is poetical heresy. Because we prefer the luxuriant imagery of Spenser, the lofty visions of Milton, and the bold con-

ceptions and unrestrained freedom of our elder bards—the giants of those days—to the sententious brevity, the studied correctness, the elegance and wit, and polished versification of the writers of a great portion of the last century; are we therefore to deny to Pope, and many of his contemporaries and disciples, a high rank in the list of British poets? Or if, with Lord Byron, we hold up Pope and Goldsmith, and, among living writers, Rogers and Campbell, as the only patterns of excellence; are we therefore to depreciate the fire and fancy of Gray, the deep pathos of Collins, or the wild strains of Southey and Coleridge? Or again, if we cannot but admire the purity and devotional seriousness which accompany the most fanciful creations of the Laureat's imagination; are we therefore with him to denounce the poetry of the noble bard, as sprung from the Prince of Pandemonium? Because we are delighted by the richness and variety of coloring, with which Sir Walter Scott has painted his high-born dames and knights, in the days of chivalry and romance, or with the gaiety and grace and sparkling spirit, which Moore has given to the love-strains and patriotic breathings of modern days; are we therefore to be blind to the nervous simplicity of Cowper, or the homely but truthful pictures of Crabbe? Or, lastly, because we will not bend the knee of abject submission to the idol which party or fashion has set up; are we therefore to revive the sweeping censures of the *Edinburgh Review*, and to deny to the bard

of Rydal a high place amongst the poets of the land ?

We dislike this poetical partizanship. It perverts the judgment as much as the prejudices of party politics; and the observation reminds us of the scene in one of the Waverley Novels, when Sir Henry Lee, who appears to have possessed some poetical taste, on hearing his nephew, Mark Everard, recite some beautiful lines out of Comus, exclaimed with rapture, "*I do* call that poetry." No sooner, however, had the malicious Master Kerneguy slyly insinuated that they were written by a certain schoolmaster, called John Milton, than all the enthusiasm of the loyal cavalier subsided, all his praises were withdrawn, and banishment from Woodstock was the fate of the unfortunate reciter.

Let us therefore endeavour to avoid these prejudices—these extremes of praise and censure—whether they relate to the poetry of the present day, or to that of the days that are gone; and let us not, as Sir Walter Scott sensibly observes, limit poetical merit to the class of composition which exactly suits our own particular taste. In making, too, any comparative estimate of the poetry of different periods, we should always take into consideration the state of society in each period, its learning, its religion, its customs, its opinions, its prejudices, and all the distinguishing peculiarities which surrounded or preceded it. For instance, if we are unable, from our want of acquaintance

with the Cambro-British and Anglo-Saxon tongues, fully to appreciate our national poetry in its earliest state, we may, when advancing another stage in its progress, acquire, by a moderate devotion of our time, such a sufficient knowledge of the poetical dialect of the 14th and 15th centuries, as will enable us to understand, and perhaps relish, the productions of the poets of those periods; and having done so, we should also, as connected therewith, endeavour to become well acquainted with that very extraordinary institution, which for the three or four preceding centuries had exercised, and was even then exercising, such a powerful influence on the minds, manners, and actions of the European race; and should also pay the greatest attention to the various circumstances and results attendant upon, and arising out of, those celebrated crusades to which the mistaken zeal and devotion of the times gave birth. We may then observe how, whilst the western world was involved in mental darkness, literature, as well as science, flourished gloriously in the east—poetry in particular being the favorite occupation of the Arabians, and so patronized by their monarchs, as to occasion the remark that “the throne of the caliphs seemed to have been raised for the Muses.” We shall then also be able to conceive the powerful effect which the intercourse occasioned by these Holy Wars had upon the literature, especially upon the poetry of Europe, and may in some degree judge of its beneficial operation upon our own—how the airy,

graceful, and brilliant illusions of oriental imagination, mingled with and softened the gloomy and terrible fictions, which had characterised the poetry of our Teutonic forefathers.

“ And wonders wild of Arabesque combine  
With Gothic imagery of darker shade.”

Then, leaving the age of chivalry, we may observe the effects produced on our poetry by that deliverance from mental bondage, and enlargement of the soul, which the light of the Reformation and the revival of learning occasioned; and from a review of the poetical productions consequent upon those events, we may be able to testify against the erroneous doctrine, broached by Warton and some modern critics, that ignorance and superstition are the parents of the imagination, and that knowledge and refinement “clip the wings of poetry.” We may then also observe, what vast mines of unwrought materials were at that time opened to the poets of our second period, and, from the unrestrained extent to which they were worked, we may perceive the reason why the poets of the greater part of our third period (for we consider Milton as more properly belonging to our second), finding every portion of poetical ground pre-occupied, sought to compensate their want of originality and grandeur of conception, by giving to their productions that melody, correctness, and graceful decoration which their predecessors had either neglected or contemned.

Again, in estimating the poetry of the last half century, we should reflect upon those spirit-stirring events which were in action at its commencement, and the influence they had upon the excited and energetic minds of our countrymen ; and that too in conjunction with the astonishing progress which has been made, during the same period, in physical knowledge and natural philosophy. We are aware it has been held by some, that the pursuits of science are inauspicious to a due devotion to the Muses, and that they seldom flourish together at the same time in any country ; but surely the poetry of our last period has lacked nothing in invention or imagination, freedom or originality. Indeed the discoveries of science and natural philosophy may properly be considered as the allies of poetry, and as often very conducive to its embellishment. How frequently, for example, has the existence of gunpowder aided and illustrated the descriptions of modern warfare ; many instances will probably occur to your minds, but not one, perhaps, more beautiful than the following from Campbell's *Battle of the Baltic*.

“ ‘ Hearts of oak ! ’ our captain cried, ‘ when each gun,  
From its adamantine lips,  
Spread a *death-shade round the ships,*  
*Like the hurricane eclipse*  
*Of the sun.* ’ ”

But, to conclude ; whether the poetry of this

country is to progress or retrograde may be a question of interesting speculation ; it is, however, one foreign to the object with which we have given you this general outline of it ; that object being to induce you to admire and cultivate it as it at present exists. At the same time, we should be sorry to see you so absorbed in its cultivation, as to suffer your partiality to interfere with the weightier and more important duties of your station, and are far from wishing to excite in you that poetical enthusiasm, which might be detrimental to the due performance of them ; but we do not think it at all necessary that such should be the result. We are aware that Pope has said, " Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring ;" but we rather agree with an elegant writer,\* that many who are not equal to reach the Parnassian heights may nevertheless approach so near as to be benefited by the climate. We would therefore recommend to you that limited attention to poetical pursuits to which we have before referred—such as your time and avocations will fairly allow—satisfied that even from such a restricted application to them much benefit may be derived, not only as a source of innocent enjoyment, and as a valuable auxiliary to your other studies, but as productive of mental improvement and moral amelioration. " Poetry," says Bishop Lowth, " refreshes the mind when it is fatigued,

\* Mackensie, in his *Man of Feeling*.

soothes it when it is agitated, relieves and invigorates when it is depressed, and instils into the soul the very principles of morality itself." True and eloquent as is this eulogium, and one with which we are tempted to close our observations, yet we do not feel satisfied at parting from the object of it in a mere prose-panegyrick, but would rather borrow from the animated apostrophe of a well-known poem, and, in the grateful accents of a favorite bard, thus bid our reluctant adieu :

" Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,  
Thou nurse of every virtue ! Fare thee well ! "

## APPENDIX.

---

### NOTE A, p. 2.

A NEW ZEALANDER thus expresses himself:—"The boisterous north wind so deeply pierced my life for thee, O Twaia! that I ascended the mountain even to the very top to witness thy departure. The rolling billows extend even as far as Twaia went. Those are driven to the eastward far away! Thou hast given me a garment to wear for thy sake, and happy shall I be when I bind it on my shoulders in remembrance of thee. *When thou art arrived at thy intended port my affections will be there also.*"

*Sharon Turner's Anglo Saxons.*

Thus also the American Chief, Pushmataha, just before his death, addressed his friends at Washington:—"I shall die, but you will return home, brethren. As you go along the paths, you will see the flowers and hear the birds sing, but Pushmataha will hear and see them no more. When you shall come to your home, they will ask you—'Where is Pushmataha?' and you will say—'He is no more.' They will hear the tidings *like the fall of a mighty oak in the stillness of the forest.*"

*Taylor's Natural History of Society.*

## NOTE B, p. 4.

The St. Graal, or Sangreal, makes a great figure in the Romances of The Round Table. It was believed that Joseph of Arimathea, having possessed himself of the plate or vessel out of which our Saviour ate the last supper, and having filled it with the blood that flowed from the Redeemer's wound at the Crucifixion, brought it to England; that after a time, the holy relic, which had received the name of Sangrael (*sanguis realis*), was lost, and that in the reign of King Arthur, many of his knights went in *quest* of it. The finding it was considered as one of the greatest exploits any of them could perform, and a seat at the Round Table, called the *seige perilous*, was always kept empty for the fortunate adventurer. Sir Gahalad, the good knight, was at length the successful occupant of the vacant chair. The Romance of the St. Graal was written by Chrestien de Troyes, in the twelfth century, and Sismondi calls it a mixture of Breton Chivalry and Sacred History.

---

NOTE C, p. 4.

The enchanter Merlin, and the fairy Morgana (Morgain le Fay), were principal personages in the Court of King Arthur. Merlin is said to have been the offspring of the devil by a Breton lady, but Morgana is represented as King Arthur's own sister. By their arts they aided the king in his battles, and rescued him from his difficulties. They also performed strange pranks among the knights and dames of his palaces. We, of course, speak here only of the Merlin of Romance. The historical Merlin, Merddin ab Morveyan, or Merlin the Caledonian, was a bard contemporary with Taliessin.

There was, however, another Merlin also, Merddin Emrys, or Merlin Ambrosius, who lived in the preceding century. It is said that some poems of both of them are still extant.

The wonderful exploits recorded of Arthur and his knights met with the devoted credence of ages, but though they had probably for a long time ceased to live "in the faith of reason," yet it was not until the last century that they induced public opinion, by what Gibbon calls a natural, though unjust, reverse, to question whether such a person as Arthur ever lived. The evidences of his real existence, however, appear indubitable. He was the son of a chief of the Silures, whom he succeeded in the beginning of the sixth century, was crowned with great splendour at Caerleon, upon the Uske, and was very successful in his contests with the Saxons, until the fatal battle of Camblan, in Cornwall, where he was killed. There seems pretty strong authority for believing that he was buried at Glastonbury Abbey, and that his remains were discovered there by Henry II. His countrymen, however, long continued to think that he was only wounded, and was, with the assistance of Merlin, carried away by Morgana into Fairyland, whence he would some day return and resume his reign.

" For when he fell an Elfin Queen,  
All in secret and unseen,  
O'er the fainting hero threw  
Her mantle of ambrosial blue,  
And bade her spirits bear him far,  
In Merlin's agate-axled car,  
To her green isle's enamelled steep  
Far in the navel of the deep."

" Thence he to Britain shall return,  
(If right prophetic rolls I learn)  
Borne on Victory's spreading plume,  
His ancient sceptre to resume;

Once more in old heroic pride,  
 His barbed courser to bestride,  
 His Knightly Table to restore,  
 And brave the tournaments of yore."

*Grave of King Arthur.*

---

NOTE D, p. 4.

Taliessin, "Chief of Bards," as he is said to be called in the Welsh Triads, lived in the middle of the sixth century. The tradition is, that he was, when an infant, found in a coracle, in Cardigan Bay, and was taken under the protection of Ellfin, son of a king of Gwent. Taliessin was much attached to the mysteries of Druidism, and held one of its chief doctrines—the metempsychosis. Aneurin, "of the Flowing Muse," was his contemporary, and was born in the North of England, the western portion whereof formed the kingdom of the Cwmraig Britons. Aneurin's principal work was the *Gododin*, accounted the most antient poem in Europe, next to those of the classical writers.

---

NOTE E, p. 5.

In alluding to the supposed different sources of Romantic Fiction, we find that we have omitted that which has been called The Classical. It would be impossible, in the shape of a note, to state the arguments and proofs by which the several theories, broached on this curious and interesting subject, are supported, and a mere general reference to them is all that can be attempted.

Dr. Percy, when he published his *Reliques*, maintained its northern origin, asserting that the spirit of chivalry had

existed amongst the Gothic nations long before the feudal age ; that the inhabitants of those countries believed in giants, dwarfs, enchanters, fairies, and dragons, from the earliest period of their history ; and that the desire of going in quest of adventures, and of challenging to single combat, was general, as was also a respectful devotion to the female sex ; that when Rollo invaded Normandy, in the beginning of the 10th century, he took with him many Scalds, who introduced into that country all the strange tales of their own, but after a time substituted the heroes of Christendom for their Pagan ancestors ; and we are led to infer that Dr. Percy considered the same effect to have been produced by the Saxon minstrels, in England, after they had become settled in the kingdom.

Dr. Warton, in support of the Oriental hypothesis, maintains that the fictions of Romance were first brought into Europe by the Saracens or Arabians, when from the northern coast of Africa they overran Spain in the 8th century ; that from Spain they passed into France ; and that no part of France gave them a more welcome reception than Brittany or Armorica. He does not, indeed, give any reason for their being thus favored, or why a province so distant from Spain should have been peculiarly attracted by them ; but, assuming it as a fact, he accounts for their transmission from thence to England, by stating that Brittany had been colonized by the Welsh in the 4th century, and that a constant communication had been kept up between the two countries, and also with Cornwall, often called West Wales. Dr. Warton does not, however, seem aware, that in one of the Welsh Triads this colonization is said to have taken place simultaneously with the peopling of Wales itself, when "Hir the Mighty conducted the nation of the Cwmry from the Summer Country over the Hazy Ocean to the Isle of Britain *and*

•

to *Armorica*." Warton does not indeed absolutely reject Dr. Percy's account, but endeavours to reconcile it with his own by saying, that a few years before the Christian era the inhabitants of Georgia, alarmed by the progress of the Roman arms, migrated in vast numbers, under their leader Odin, into various districts of Scandinavia, carrying with them all the usages and fictions of the East; and that, when the invasion of the North of France took place under Rollo, in the 10th century, the Scaldic fables and legends met with an easier admission there, from their being founded upon those fictions and usages, and the dissemination which had previously occurred of the latter in those parts through his adopted channel.

It seems, however, to be generally admitted, that in all the *first* Romances of Chivalry (and it is said they can be traced up to the 11th century), King Arthur, "begirt with British and Armoric Knights," and his Queen Guenever, and Merlin, and Morgana, are the principal personages; and that the scenes of their adventures are laid in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany; but never in Spain, Italy, or Germany, or in any parts of France south of the Loire. It is also an opinion now, and which has been for some time entertained, that whatever part of Geoffery's History may be fabulous in itself, the notion, that he was the inventor of the fictions it contains, is wholly unfounded. It is now allowed to be, in general, a faithful translation of a work discovered by his friend and contemporary, William de Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford, whilst on a journey in Brittany;—that although Geoffery might have made some interpolations, yet that the stories upon which they are founded are taken by him from the verbal accounts of the Archdeacon, or from those which were then current, and which were sanctioned by popular traditionary belief. Some Welsh critics, however,

•

affirm that Geoffery's is a vitiated translation of the History of the British Kings, written by Tyssilio, or St. Telian, Bishop of St. Asaph, in the 7th century. This "enticing tale," as Sir Walter Scott, in his introduction to the Romance of Sir Tristrem, calls it, soon drew, he says, into its vortex whatever remained of British history and tradition, and all the heroes, whose memory had been preserved by song, were represented as the associates and companions of the renowned Arthur; and to the songs of the Bards celebrating the struggles of the Britons against the Saxons, and which, in exaggerating, have disguised and almost obliterated their true exploits, Sir Walter says may be referred one principal source of romantic fiction, which overflowed Europe during the middle ages. He also observes, that the earliest French authors refer to King Arthur and his Round Table; and that it is admitted by all the French *litterati*, that the Romances founded upon the annals of the Pseudo-Turpin, celebrating the actions of Charlemagne and his Paladins, are of inferior antiquity to those relating to British story. It is, therefore, we think, fairly to be inferred, that Scott was an advocate for the origin we are now considering. We understand, also, that his friend Leyden, the great Scotch antiquary, held the same opinion; and that it has the support of Southey in his preface to *Morte d'Arthur*, and of Ellis in his *Metrical Romances*.

But Mr. Dunlop, in his *History of Fiction*, asserts that neither the Gothic, nor the Arabian, nor the British theory, is entitled to the honor claimed for it, and that many of the marvels of Romance may find parallels in the fables of Greece; and he produces several strong and striking instances. But though Mr. Dunlop might be called the advocate of the *classical* hypothesis, yet, upon the whole, he seems inclined to concur with the opinion

expressed by Mr. Price, in his Introduction to Warton's History, that Romantic Fiction ought not to be ascribed to one exclusive source; and that the error consists in appropriating to a particular age or people that which is, in fact, of universal derivation, and the common property of mankind.

---

NOTE F, p. 55.

The following are Extracts from Milton's Latin Poems, *Mansus* and the *Epitaphium Damonis*, with translations by Mr. Symons:—

"Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmine reges,  
Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem !  
Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere mensæ  
Magnanimos heroas."

---

"Whene'er my Muse shall sound the British strings,  
And wake again to song her native kings ;  
Hail her great Arthur, who, from mortals far,  
Now pants for his return, and burns for war ;  
Record the hero-knights who sheathed the sword,  
Linked in strong union with the mighty board."

---

"Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per œquora puppes  
Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Ino-genis  
Brennumque Arviragumque duces, priscumque Belinum,  
Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos ;  
Tum gravidam Arturo, fatali fraude Iögernem,  
Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlois arma,  
Merlini dolus."

---

"High on Rutupi's cliffs my Muse shall hail  
The first white gleanings of the Dardan sail,

Shall sing the realms by Inogen controll'd,  
 And Brennus, Arvirage and Belin old,  
 Shall sing Armorica, at length subdued,  
 By British steel in Gallic blood imbued.  
 And Uther, in the form of Gorlois led,  
 By Merlin's fraud to Iogenie's bed,  
 Whence Arthur sprung."

---

NOTE G.

The following is the parallel to which we have alluded, when noticing Addison's verses to Sir Godfrey Kneller on his picture of George the First:—

" Wise Phidias thus, his skill to prove,  
 Thro' many a God advanced to Jove,  
 And taught the polish'd rocks to shine  
 With airs and lineaments divine,  
 Till Greece amaz'd, and half afraid,  
 Th' assembled Deities survey'd.

" Great Pan, who wont to chase the fair  
 And loved the spreading oak, was there;\*  
 Old Saturn, too, with upcast eyes,  
 Beheld his abdicated skies;†  
 And mighty Mars, for war renown'd,  
 In adamantinè armour frown'd;  
 By him the childless goddess rose ‡  
 Minerva, studious to compose  
 Her twisted threads; the web she strung,  
 And o'er a loom of marble hung:  
 Thetis, the troubled ocean's queen,  
 Match'd with a mortal, there was seen, §

\* Charles II.

† James II.

‡ William and Mary.

§ Queen Anne and P. George of Denmark.

Reclining on a funeral urn,  
 Her short-lived darling son to mourn.  
 The last was he whose thunder slew  
 The Titan race, a rebel crew,  
 That from a hundred hills allied  
 In impious league their king defied.\*

---

NOTE H.

In our notice of Collins, we referred to several pleasing poets who flourished during our third period, but whose works our time and space would not allow us separately to consider. Amongst them, with their principal works set opposite, we would mention the following names:—

|                   |                                                             |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| LORD LITTLETON... | Eclogues; and Monody on the Death of Lady Littleton.        |
| MICKLE .....      | Pollio, an Elegy; Mary Queen of Scots; and Cumnor Hall.     |
| SCOTT OF AMWELL.  | Moral and Oriental Eclogues; and Amwell.                    |
| JAGO. ....        | Edghill; Blackbirds and Swallows.                           |
| SOAME JENYNS..... | Essay on Virtue; Immortality of the Soul.                   |
| CAWTHORNE.....    | Abelard to Eloisa; Lady Jane Gray to Lord Guildford.        |
| GLOVER.....       | Leonidas; Sir J. Newton; and Admiral Hosier's Ghost.        |
| LLOYD.....        | Progress of Envy.                                           |
| WHITEHEAD.....    | Anna Boleyn to Henry VIII.; Vision of Solomon; and Elegies. |
| ROBERT BLAIR..... | The Grave.                                                  |
| SEENSTONE .....   | The Schoolmistress; Pastorals; Jemmy Dawson.                |
| LANGHORNE .....   | Enlargement of the Mind; The Country Justice.               |

\* George I. and the Rebellion of the Highlanders, in 1715.

|                  |                                             |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| LORD NUGENT..... | Ode to Sir Wm. Pulteney; Ode to Mankind.    |
| BLACKLOCK .....  | The Author's Picture; Ode to Aurora.        |
| FAWKES .....     | Translations of Greek Poets; The Brown Jug. |
| ANSTEY.....      | New Bath Guide.                             |
| MALLET .....     | William and Margaret; Edwin and Emma.       |
| SMOLLETT .....   | Ode to Independence; Tears of Scotland.     |

---

NOTE I, p. 90.

There is certainly a great resemblance between Goldsmith's Hermit, and the French ballad of Raimond et Angeline. Take for instance the following extracts:—

“ Mon fil ! dit le Solitaire,  
 Crains ce feu qui le seduit;  
 C'est un vapeur légère,  
 Elle egare qui la suit.  
 Viens donc ma cellule obscure,  
 Je t'offrirai de bon cœur,  
*Mon pain noir, ma couche dure,*  
*Mon repos, et mon bonheur.”*

“ Forbear, my Son, the Hermit cries,  
 To tempt the dangerous gloom,  
 For yonder phantom only flies  
 To lure thee to thy doom.  
 Here to the houseless child of want  
 My door is open still,  
 And, tho' my portion is but scant,  
 I give it with good will.  
 Then turn to night and freely share  
 Whate'er my cell bestows,  
*My rushy couch and frugal fare,*  
*My blessing and repose.”*

---

## NOTE K, p. 95.

It is said, that Sir Walter Scott, whilst shewing the beautiful scenery of the Yarrow to a lady, we believe the late Mrs. Hemans, recited to her the whole of Logan's poem, and could not help shedding tears as he repeated the following lines:—

“ His mother from the window look'd  
With all the longing of a mother,  
His little sister weeping walk'd  
The greenwood path to meet her brother.  
They saught him east, they saught him west,  
They saught him all the forest thorough,  
They only saw the cloud of night,  
They only heard the roar of Yarrow.”

THE END.







